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L'ALLEGRO IL PENSEROSO

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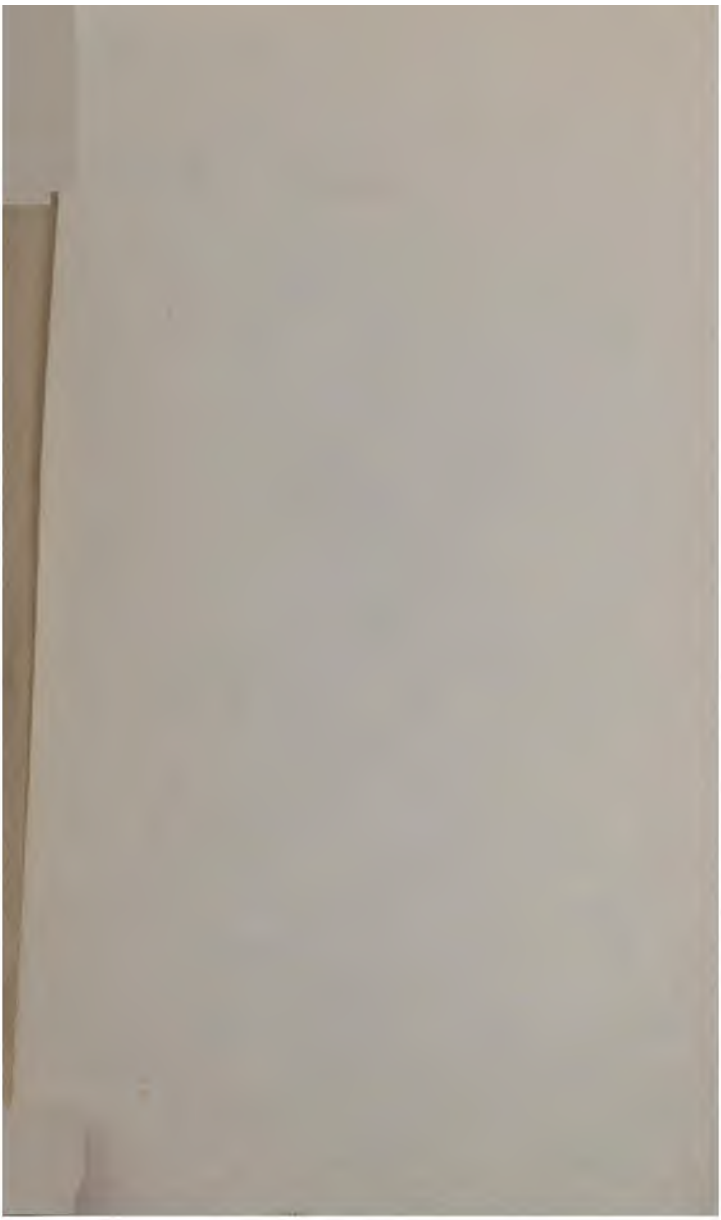

MILTON'S

L'ALLEGRO, IL PENSEROSO,

ARCADES, LYCIDAS,

SONNETS ETC.

WITH

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

THIS selection comprises, with only one notable exception (*Comus* *), all the English poetry that Milton wrote between 1630 and 1660—a period of thirty years. On the former date he had already been five years at the University of Cambridge, and on the latter he finally escaped from the political troubles that had beset him for nearly twenty years and set to work in earnest upon his great epic, *Paradise Lost.* If we divide his life into four periods, as detailed below, we find that the poems in this volume belong to the second and third of these, and, if we exclude the Sonnets, entirely to the second. We have to deal, therefore, with the products of Milton's earlier muse; his later or epic muse belongs exclusively to the fourth and last period of his life.

I. Pre-literary period, 1608-25.
II. Period of College and Country life and Travel, 1625-40.
III. Controversial period, 1640-60.
IV. Period of Great Poems, 1660-74.

I. John Milton was born on December 9th, 1608, about eight years before the death of Shakespeare. His father, a prosperous London scrivener, was a pious and cultured man, and chose as his son's first tutor Thomas Young, a Puritan divine. In his twelfth year

* A separate volume of this series.

the boy was entered as a day-scholar at St. Paul's School, and there he attended for four or five years. Before he left this school he had made good progress in Greek and Latin, he knew some Hebrew, and he had also, by his father's advice, studied French and Italian. His own account of these laborious pre-college days is as follows: "My father destined me while yet a little boy for the study of humane letters, which I seized with such eagerness, that from the twelfth year of my age I scarcely ever went from my lessons to bed before midnight; which indeed was the first cause of injury to my eyes, to whose natural weakness there were also added frequent headaches. All which not retarding my impetuosity in learning, he caused me to be daily instructed, both at the grammar-school and under other masters at home, and then when I had acquired various tongues, and also not some insignificant taste for the sweetness of philosophy, he sent me to Cambridge." He had already shown some facility in the writing of verses, but only two paraphrases of psalms have been preserved to us.

II. In February, 1625—six weeks before the accession of Charles I., Milton was enrolled at Christ's College, Cambridge, and for seven years he continued to study there. He took the B.A. degree in 1628-9, and the M.A. degree in July, 1632. During these years he wrote a number of Latin pieces and the following English poems:—*On the Death of a Fair Infant* (1626)—his first original poem in his native tongue; *At a Vacation Exercise* (1628); *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity* (1629); an unfinished piece on *The Passion;* also the five *short* poems that stand at the beginning of this volume, *and the first and second* sonnets. In the *Song on May*

Morning we have a foretaste of the spirit of *L'Allegro*, both in the matter and the rhythm; in the lines *On Shakespeare* we already discover some of the most striking characteristics of Milton's style; in the two poems *On the University Carrier* the poet shows a kind of whimsical pleasantry that does not appear again anywhere in his poems; and in the graceful *Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester* we have much of the exquisite perfection of language and metre seen in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, along with a glimpse of the elegiac beauty and religious feeling of *Lycidas*. The small piece *On Time* is variously referred to the period of Milton's life at Cambridge and to the Horton period; similarly with *At a Solemn Music* and *Upon the Circumcision*. The second sonnet closes the list of his compositions at Cambridge. He had already found his true vocation—poetry; and, in obedience to "an inward prompting" to fit himself by labour and intent study for his life-work, he gave up all intention of studying for the Church, left the university after obtaining his degree and retired at the age of twenty-three to his father's house in the small village of Horton, near Windsor, and about twenty miles from London.

To the six quiet years of country life at Horton —years which Milton regarded merely as a time of "ripening" for his great work, we owe the best of his minor poems, written in the order in which they are here named, viz. *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, *Arcades*, *Comus*, and *Lycidas*. It has been said that these pieces, even though their author had not written *Paradise Lost*, "would have sufficed to place their author in a class apart, and above all those who had used the English language for poetical purposes before him."

Yet Milton himself regarded them as no more than the first fruits of his genius; he had, in his own estimation, shattered the leaves of his poetic laurels "before the mellowing year." In April, 1638, he set out on a journey to Italy, the classic land of poetry and art. He had spent some months in Florence and Rome, and was staying in Naples when "the sad news of civil war" reached him; he resolved to turn his face homewards, "for," he says, "I thought it disgraceful, while my fellow-countrymen were fighting for liberty, that I should be travelling abroad for pleasure." He retraced his steps in a leisurely manner, and arrived in England in August, 1639. It was on this journey that he wrote his Italian Sonnets, and shortly after his return he wrote that elegy on the death of his friend Charles Diodati, to which allusion is made in the notes on *Lycidas*.

III. In the end of 1639 Milton took lodgings in London, and hoped to betake himself to his favourite studies with a view to still further maturing himself for the production of some great English poem. But this hope was not fulfilled. The Scots had rebelled against Episcopacy, and the Puritans of England (of whom, both by nature and upbringing, Milton was one) were all in sympathy with them. The famous Long Parliament had already resisted in a number of ways the unconstitutional conduct of Charles I., and had decided to sweep away the abuses of the Episcopal Church. How best to do this was the important question, and to the answering of this Milton first devoted himself with all the enthusiasm of his truly religious spirit.

Then, in 1642, civil war broke out, and Milton, of *course, declared for the* side of the Parliament. In

1643, he nevertheless married a lady belonging to a Royalist family, who left him after less than two months and did not return for two years. This turned his attention to the question of divorce, and the new controversy between the Presbyterians and the Independents provided still more work for his pen. Throughout all the din and smoke of war we catch only a few glimpses of the poet, as distinct from the pamphleteer: how few these glimpses are the sonnets composed in these years will show. From 1640 to 1648, when the last embers of the civil war were finally extinguished, Milton wrote nothing in poetry but nine sonnets (VIII.-XV.) and a few Latin pieces. And in the next ten years, when he was in the employment of the new government, and when upon him was thrown the task of answering all attacks made upon it, he wrote, along with much prose, nothing more than his eight remaining sonnets (XVI.-XXIII.) and a few scraps in Latin. In 1658, when he wrote his last sonnet, Cromwell died. Milton continued in office as Latin Secretary, and within a few weeks of the Restoration we find him issuing projects for the best means of establishing a free commonwealth. He had been blind since 1652; in 1653-4 his first wife died, and in 1656 he married again, but his second wife died fifteen months after the marriage; in 1664 he married a third time.

IV. At the Restoration, Milton was placed for a short time under arrest, but he was at last able to take up the task that had been laid aside so long, and in 1665 the composition of *Paradise Lost* was completed. It was followed in 1671 by *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. In 1674 the poet died.

We shall sum up in a few words the most striking characteristics of Milton's genius.

1. First of all we may note his early and settled conviction that poetry was his vocation. He tells us, before he is twenty-three years of age, that he has discovered "whether aught was imposed upon me by them that had the overlooking or betaken to of mine own choice, in English or other tongue, prosing or versing, *but chiefly this latter*, the style, by certain vital signs it had, was likely to live." In 1637, just before he wrote *Lycidas*, he felt that God had instilled into him a vehement love of the beautiful, and declared that he was "wont day and night to seek for this idea of the beautiful through all the forms and faces of things .... You ask what I am thinking of? So may the good Deity help me, of immortality."—*Letter to Diodati.*

2. Along with this we note his sense of the greatness of the poet's task, and his consequent self-appreciation, which, however, was very different from the sickly self-conceit of that race of poets who immediately preceded him, and of that equally complacent race who came after him. His ideal was too high to enable him to be other than truly modest. He looked for inspiration to "that eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out His seraphim with the hallowed fire of His altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom He pleases."—*Reason of Church Government* (1641).

3. His rule of life was therefore a strict one: the inward ripeness that he desired could only be attained *in one way*—by the noblest purity in every thought and action. "*Long it was* not after when I was confirmed

in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem—that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things."—*Apology for Smectymnuus.* As a part of his noble austerity of life we may specially note his strictly temperate habits. In his sixth elegy he tells us that they who would hope to sing of heroes and to explore the counsels of Heaven must live simply:

> Let herbs to them a bloodless banquet give;
> In beechen goblets let their beverage shine,
> Cool from the crystal spring, their sober wine!
> (Cowper's translation.)

The same sentiment shows itself in the delineation of *Penseroso*, one of whose companions is "spare Fast"; in *Lycidas* (line 72); and in Sonnet XX. For the poet is sacred and must draw his inspiration from Heaven, not from the wine-cup.

4. He was a man of industrious and select reading. His knowledge was most extensive. "Whatever," says Prof. Masson, "of learning, of science, or of discipline in logic or philosophy, the University at that time could give, he had duly and in the largest measure acquired. No better Greek or Latin scholar probably had the University in that age sent forth; he was proficient in the Hebrew tongue, and in all the other customary aids to a Biblical Theology; and he could speak and write well in French and Italian. His acquaintance, obtained by independent reading, with the history and with the whole body of the literature of ancient and modern nations, was extensive and various."—*Three Devils*, etc. When he left the University and went to Horton he

devoted himself to a steady perusal of the Greek and Latin writers, and was eager to learn "anything new in Mathematics or in Music." And just before he was whirled into the controversies of Church and State he was still looking forward to a time of hard study.

5. His religious fervour was as much a part of himself as his poetic temperament. Hence, in the controversial war in which he engaged, he believed his task to have been imposed upon him by Heaven in no less degree than that other task of writing a great poem. And hence, also, it was as natural for Milton to introduce deep thoughts of death and immortality into a few lines written to set on a clock-case, or to compare the Marchioness of Winchester with Rachel, or to speak of Lycidas in the same breath as a risen saint and the "genius of the shore," as it was for him to write of the great truths of Scripture in *Paradise Lost*. His grand seriousness is over all.

6. His love of music is an important element of his genius. His father was no mean musician, and both father and son numbered famous musicians among their friends. "As nature had endowed him in no ordinary degree with that most exquisite of her gifts, the ear and the passion for harmony, he had studied music as an art, and had taught himself not only to sing in the society of others, but also to touch the keys for his solitary pleasure" (Masson, *Three Devils, etc.*). His style is everywhere dominated by his mastery over the effects of music, and his works are full of expressions of his love for it. It influences his choice of words, his choice of a particular form of a word, and even his pronunciation; it explains many of those inversions so common in his

poetry; it accounts for his use of alliteration and for the form of many of the compound epithets that he coined so freely; it heightens the charm of his songs; and, above all, it has enabled him once for all to stamp the character of English blank verse.

7. Bound up with the preceding is his laborious striving after perfection of workmanship. We shall close with the words of Mr. Matthew Arnold on this point: "If to our English race an inadequate sense for perfection of work is a real danger, if the discipline of respect for a high and flawless excellence is peculiarly needed by us, Milton is of all our gifted men the best lesson, the most salutary influence. In the sure and flawless perfection of his rhythm and diction he is as admirable as Virgil or Dante, and in this respect he is unique amongst us. No one else in English literature and art possesses the like distinction."—*Essays in Criticism*, 2nd series.

MILTON'S

L'ALLEGRO, IL PENSEROSO, ARCADES, LYCIDAS, SONNETS, Etc.

SONG ON MAY MORNING.

Now the bright morning-star, Day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.
Hail, bounteous May, that dost inspire
Mirth, and youth, and warm desire!
Woods and groves are of thy dressing;
Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.
Thus we salute thee with our early song,
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.

ON SHAKESPEARE. 1630.

What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones
The labour of an age in pilèd stones?
Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a livelong monument.

For whilst, to the shame of slow-endeavouring art,
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,
Dost make us marble with too much conceiving,
And so sepúlchred in such pomp dost lie
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

ON THE UNIVERSITY CARRIER.

Who sickened in the time of his Vacancy, being forbid to go to London by reason of the Plague.

Here lies old Hobson. Death hath broke his girt,
And here, alas! hath laid him in the dirt;
Or else, the ways being foul, twenty to one
He's here stuck in a slough, and overthrown.
'Twas such a shifter that, if truth were known,
Death was half glad when he had got him down;
For he had any time this ten years full
Dodged with him betwixt Cambridge and *The Bull.*
And surely Death could never have prevailed,
Had not his weekly course of carriage failed;
But lately, finding him so long at home,
And thinking now his journey's end was come,
And that he had ta'en up his latest inn,
In the kind office of a chamberlin
Showed him his room where he must lodge that night,
Pulled off his boots, and took away the light.
If any ask for him, it shall be said,
"Hobson has supped, and's newly gone to bed."

ANOTHER ON THE SAME.

HERE lieth one who did most truly prove
That he could never die while he could move;
So hung his destiny, never to rot
While he might still jog on and keep his trot;
Made of sphere-metal, never to decay
Until his revolution was at stay.
Time numbers motion, yet (without a crime
'Gainst old truth) motion numbered out his time;
And, like an engine moved with wheel and weight,
His principles being ceased, he ended straight.
Rest, that gives all men life, gave him his death,
And too much breathing put him out of breath;
Nor were it contradiction to affirm
Too long vacation hastened on his term.
Merely to drive the time away he sickened,
Fainted, and died, nor would with ale be quickened.
"Nay," quoth he, on his swooning bed outstretched,
"If I mayn't carry, sure I'll ne'er be fetched,
But vow, though the cross doctors all stood hearers,
For one carrier put down to make six bearers."
Ease was his chief disease; and, to judge right,
He died for heaviness that his cart went light.
His leisure told him that his time was come,
And lack of load made his life burdensome,
That even to his last breath (there be that say't),
As he were pressed to death, he cried, "More weight!"
But, had his doings lasted as they were,
He had been an immortal carrier.
Obedient to the moon he spent his date
In course reciprocal, and had his fate
Linked to the mutual flowing of the seas;
Yet (strange to think) his wain was his increase.
His letters are delivered all and gone;
Only remains this superscription.

AN EPITAPH ON THE MARCHIONESS OF WINCHESTER.

This rich marble doth inter
The honoured wife of Winchester,
A Viscount's daughter, an Earl's heir,
Besides what her virtues fair
Added to her noble birth,
More than she could own from Earth.
Summers three times eight save one
She had told; alas! too soon,
After so short time of breath,
To house with darkness and with death!
Yet, had the number of her days
Been as complete as was her praise,
Nature and Fate had had no strife
In giving limit to her life.
Her high birth and her graces sweet
Quickly found a lover meet;
The virgin quire for her request
The god that sits at marriage-feast;
He at their invoking came,
But with a scarce well-lighted flame;
And in his garland, as he stood,
Ye might discern a cypress-bud.
Once had the early matrons run
To greet her of a lovely son,
And now with second hope she goes,
And calls Lucina to her throes;
But, whether by mischance or blame,
Atropos for Lucina came,
And with remorseless cruelty
Spoiled at once both fruit and tree.
The hapless babe before his birth
Had burial, not yet laid in earth;
And the languished mother's womb

Was not long a living tomb.
So have I seen some tender slip,
Saved with care from winter's nip,
The pride of her carnation train,
Plucked up by some unheedy swain,
Who only thought to crop the flower
New shot up from vernal shower;
But the fair blossom hangs the head
Sideways, as on a dying bed,
And those pearls of dew she wears
Prove to be presaging tears
Which the sad morn had let fall
On her hastening funeral.
Gentle Lady, may thy grave
Peace and quiet ever have!
After this thy travail sore,
Sweet rest seize thee evermore,
That, to give the world increase,
Shortened hast thy own life's lease!
Here, besides the sorrowing
That thy noble house doth bring,
Here be tears of perfect moan
Weept for thee in Helicon;
And some flowers and some bays
For thy hearse, to strew the ways,
Sent thee from the banks of Came,
Devoted to thy virtuous name;
Whilst thou, bright Saint, high sitt'st in glory,
Next her, much like to thee in story,
That fair Syrian shepherdess,
Who, after years of barrenness,
The highly-favoured Joseph bore
To him that served for her before,
And at her next birth, much like thee,
Through pangs fled to felicity,
Far within the bosom bright

Of blazing Majesty and Light:
There with thee, new-welcome Saint,
Like fortunes may her soul acquaint,
With thee there clad in radiant sheen,
No Marchioness, but now a Queen.

ON TIME.

Fly, envious Time, till thou run out thy race:
Call on the lazy leaden-stepping Hours,
Whose speed is but the heavy plummet's pace;
And glut thyself with what thy womb devours,
Which is no more than what is false and vain,
And merely mortal dross;
So little is our loss,
So little is thy gain!
For, when as each thing bad thou hast entombed,
And, last of all, thy greedy self consumed,
Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss
With an individual kiss,
And Joy shall overtake us as a flood;
When every thing that is sincerely good
And perfectly divine,
With Truth, and Peace, and Love, shall ever shine
About the supreme throne
Of Him, to whose happy-making sight alone
When once our heavenly-guided soul shall climb,
Then, all this earthly grossness quit,
Attired with stars we shall for ever sit,
Triumphing over Death, and Chance, and thee, O Time!

L'ALLEGRO.

HENCE, loathed Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born
In Stygian cave forlorn
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings;
There, under ebon shades and low-browed rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclept Euphrosyne,
And by men heart-easing Mirth;
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister Graces more,
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore:
Or whether (as some sager sing)
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a-Maying,
There, on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful Jollity,
Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks and wreathèd smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it, as you go,
On the light fantastic toe;

And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreproved pleasures free;
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise,
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweet-briar or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine;
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin;
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before:
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill:
Sometime walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate
Where the great Sun begins his state,
Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the ploughman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the landskip round it measures:

Russet lawns, and fallows grey,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied;
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide;
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighbouring eyes.
Hard by a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met
Are at their savoury dinner set
Of herbs and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phyllis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tanned haycock in the mead.
Sometimes, with secure delight,
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the chequered shade,
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail:
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How Faery Mab the junkets eat.
She was pinched and pulled, she said;
And he, by Friar's lantern led,
Tells how the drudging goblin sweat
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,

When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-labourers could not end;
Then lies him down, the lubber fiend,
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And crop-full out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
Towered cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.
And ever, against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs,
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
In notes with many a winding bout
Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,

Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus' self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice.
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

IL PENSEROSO.

Hence, vain deluding Joys,
The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bested,
Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sun-beams,
Or likest hovering dreams,
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.
But, hail! thou Goddess sage and holy!
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
Or that starred Ethiop queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above

The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she; in Saturn's reign
Such mixture was not held a stain.
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come; but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove's altar sing;
And add to these retired Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;
But, first and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,
The Cherub Contemplation;
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will deign a song,

In her sweetest saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
Gently o'er the accustomed oak.
Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chantress, oft the woods among
I woo, to hear thy even-song;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon,
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide pathless way,
And oft, as if her head she bowed,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still removèd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm
To bless the doors from nightly harm.
Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,
With thrice great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;

And of those demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or underground,
Whose power hath a true consent
With planet or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptred pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine,
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskined stage.
But, O sad Virgin! that thy power
Might raise Musæus from his bower;
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what love did seek;
Or call up him that left half-told
The story of Cambuscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canacè to wife,
That owned the virtuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride;
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of turneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced, as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kerchieft in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,

Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute-drops from off the eaves.
And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There, in close covert, by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honeyed thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid;
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,

Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew,
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give;
And I with thee will choose to live.

ARCADES.

Part of an Entertainment presented to the Countess Dowager of Derby at Harefield by some Noble Persons of her Family; who appear on the Scene in pastoral habit, moving toward the seat of state, with this song:

I. *Song.*

Look, Nymphs and Shepherds, look!
What sudden blaze of majesty
Is that which we from hence descry,
Too divine to be mistook?
This, this is she
To whom our vows and wishes bend:
Here our solemn search hath end.

Fame, that her high worth to raise
Seemed erst so lavish and profuse,
We may justly now accuse
Of detraction from her praise:

Less than half we find expressed;
Envy bid conceal the rest.

Mark what radiant state she spreads,
In circle round her shining throne
Shooting her beams like silver threads:
This, this is she alone,
Sitting like a goddess bright
In the centre of her light.

Might she the wise Latona be,
Or the towered Cybele,
Mother of a hundred gods?
Juno dares not give her odds:
Who had thought this clime had held
A deity so unparalleled?

As they come forward, THE GENIUS OF THE WOOD *appears, and, turning toward them, speaks.*

Gen. Stay, gentle Swains, for, though in this disguise,
I see bright honour sparkle through your eyes;
Of famous Arcady ye are, and sprung
Of that renownèd flood, so often sung,
Divine Alpheus, who, by secret sluice,
Stole under seas to meet his Arethuse;
And ye, the breathing roses of the wood,
Fair silver-buskined Nymphs, as great and good.
I know this quest of yours and free intent
Was all in honour and devotion meant
To the great mistress of yon princely shrine,
Whom with low reverence I adore as mine,
And with all helpful service will comply
To further this night's glad solemnity,
And lead ye where ye may more near behold
What shallow-searching Fame hath left untold;
Which I full oft, amidst these shades alone,

Have sat to wonder at, and gaze upon.
For know, by lot from Jove, I am the Power
Of this fair wood, and live in oaken bower,
To nurse the saplings tall, and curl the grove
With ringlets quaint and wanton windings wove;
And all my plants I save from nightly ill
Of noisome winds and blasting vapours chill;
And from the boughs brush off the evil dew,
And heal the harms of thwarting thunder blue,
Or what the cross dire-looking planet smites,
Or hurtful worm with cankered venom bites.
When evening grey doth rise, I fetch my round
Over the mount, and all this hallowed ground;
And early, ere the odorous breath of morn
Awakes the slumbering leaves, or tasselled horn
Shakes the high thicket, haste I all about,
Number my ranks, and visit every sprout
With puissant words and murmurs made to bless.
But else, in deep of night, when drowsiness
Hath locked up mortal sense, then listen I
To the celestial Sirens' harmony,
That sit upon the nine infolded spheres,
And sing to those that hold the vital shears,
And turn the adamantine spindle round
On which the fate of gods and men is wound.
Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie,
To lull the daughters of Necessity,
And keep unsteady Nature to her law,
And the low world in measured motion draw
After the heavenly tune, which none can hear
Of human mould with gross unpurgèd ear.
And yet such music worthiest were to blaze
The peerless height of her immortal praise
Whose lustre leads us, and for her most fit,
If my inferior hand or voice could hit
Inimitable sounds. Yet, as we go,

Whate'er the skill of lesser gods can show
I will assay, her worth to celebrate,
And so attend ye toward her glittering state;
Where ye may all, that are of noble stem,
Approach, and kiss her sacred vesture's hem.

II. *Song.*

O'er the smooth enamelled green,
Where no print of step hath been,
Follow me, as I sing
And touch the warbled string;
Under the shady roof
Of branching elm star-proof
Follow me.
I will bring you where she sits,
Clad in splendour as befits
Her deity.
Such a rural Queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.

III. *Song.*

Nymphs and Shepherds, dance no more
By sandy Ladon's lilied banks;
On old Lycæus, or Cyllene hoar,
Trip no more in twilight ranks;
Though Erymanth your loss deplore,
A better soil shall give ye thanks.
From the stony Mænalus
Bring your flocks, and live with us;
Here ye shall have greater grace,
To serve the Lady of this place.
Though Syrinx your Pan's mistress were,
Yet Syrinx well might wait on her.
Such a rural Queen
All Arcadia hath not seen.

LYCIDAS.

In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637; and, by occasion, foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height.

YET once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.
Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse:
So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favour my destined urn,
And as he passes turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!
For we were nursed upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill;
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,
We drove a-field, and both together heard
What time the grey-fly winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose at evening bright

Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,
Tempered to the oaten flute ;
Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long ;
And old Damœtas loved to hear our song.
But, oh ! the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone and never must return !
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes, mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the white-thorn blows ;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.
Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas ?
For neither were ye playing on the steep
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream.
Ay me ! I fondly dream
"Had ye been there," . . . for what could that have done ?
What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament,
When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore ?
Alas ! what boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse ?

The Sea-Nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended:
Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she; in Saturn's reign
Such mixture was not held a stain.
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come; but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove's altar sing;
And add to these retired Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;
But, first and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,
The Cherub Contemplation;
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will deign a song,

Next, Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.
"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?"
Last came, and last did go,
The Pilot of the Galilean Lake;
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake:—
"How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake,
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."
Return, Alpheus; the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,

And of those demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or underground,
Whose power hath a true consent
With planet or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptred pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine,
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskined stage.
But, O sad Virgin! that thy power
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Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
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And of the wondrous horse of brass
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With minute-drops from off the eaves.
And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe with heavèd stroke
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There, in close covert, by some brook,
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Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honeyed thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid;
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,

Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
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We may justly now accuse
Of detraction from her praise:

Less than half we find expressed;
Envy bid conceal the rest.

Mark what radiant state she spreads,
In circle round her shining throne
Shooting her beams like silver threads:
This, this is she alone,
Sitting like a goddess bright
In the centre of her light.

Might she the wise Latona be,
Or the towered Cybele,
Mother of a hundred gods?
Juno dares not give her odds:
Who had thought this clime had held
A deity so unparalleled?

As they come forward, THE GENIUS OF THE WOOD *appears, and, turning toward them, speaks.*

Gen. Stay, gentle Swains, for, though in this disguise,
I see bright honour sparkle through your eyes;
Of famous Arcady ye are, and sprung
Of that renownèd flood, so often sung,
Divine Alpheus, who, by secret sluice,
Stole under seas to meet his Arethuse;
And ye, the breathing roses of the wood,
Fair silver-buskined Nymphs, as great and good.
I know this quest of yours and free intent
Was all in honour and devotion meant
To the great mistress of yon princely shrine,
Whom with low reverence I adore as mine,
And with all helpful service will comply
To further this night's glad solemnity,
And lead ye where ye may more near behold
What shallow-searching Fame hath left untold;
Which I full oft, amidst these shades alone,

Broke him, as that dishonest victory
At Chæronea, fatal to liberty,
Killed with report that old man eloquent,
Though later born than to have known the days
Wherein your father flourished, yet by you,
Madam, methinks I see him living yet:
So well your words his noble virtues praise
That all both judge you to relate him true
And to possess them, honoured Margaret.

XI.

ON THE DETRACTION WHICH FOLLOWED UPON MY WRITING CERTAIN TREATISES.

A BOOK was writ of late called *Tetrachordon*,
And woven close, both matter, form, and style;
The subject new: it walked the town awhile,
Numbering good intellects; now seldom pored on.
Cries the stall-reader, "Bless us! what a word on
A title-page is this!"; and some in file
Stand spelling false, while one might walk to Mile-
End Green. Why, is it harder, sirs, than *Gordon*,
Colkitto, or *Macdonnel*, or *Galasp?*
Those rugged names to our like mouths grow sleek
That would have made Quintilian stare and gasp.
Thy age, like ours, O soul of Sir John Cheek,
Hated not learning worse than toad or asp,
When thou taught'st Cambridge and King Edward Greek.

XII.

ON THE SAME.

I DID but prompt the age to quit their clogs
By the known rules of ancient liberty,
When straight a barbarous noise environs me

Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes, and dogs;
As when those hinds that were transformed to frogs
Railed at Latona's twin-born progeny,
Which after held the Sun and Moon in fee.
But this is got by casting pearl to hogs,
That bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,
And still revolt when Truth would set them free.
Licence they mean when they cry Liberty;
For who loves that must first be wise and good:
But from that mark how far they rove we see,
For all this waste of wealth and loss of blood.

XII*a*.

ON THE NEW FORCERS OF CONSCIENCE UNDER THE LONG PARLIAMENT.

BECAUSE you have thrown off your Prelate Lord,
And with stiff vows renounced his Liturgy,
To seize the widowed whore Plurality
From them whose sin ye envied, not abhorred,
Dare ye for this adjure the civil sword
To force our consciences that Christ set free,
And ride us with a Classic Hierarchy,
Taught ye by mere A. S. and Rutherford?
Men whose life, learning, faith, and pure intent,
Would have been held in high esteem with Paul
Must now be named and printed heretics
By shallow Edwards and Scotch What-d'ye-call!
But we do hope to find out all your tricks,
Your plots and packing, worse than those of Trent,
That so the Parliament
May with their wholesome and preventive shears
Clip your phylacteries, though baulk your ears,
And succour our just fears,
When they shall read this clearly in your charge:
New *Presbyter* is but old *Priest* writ large.

XIII.

TO MR. H. LAWES, ON HIS AIRS.

HARRY, whose tuneful and well-measured song
First taught our English music how to span
Words with just note and accent, not to scan
With Midas' ears, committing short and long,
Thy worth and skill exempts thee from the throng,
With praise enough for Envy to look wan;
To after age thou shalt be writ the man
That with smooth air couldst humour best our tongue.
Thou honour'st Verse, and Verse must lend her wing
To honour thee, the priest of Phœbus' quire,
That tunest their happiest lines in hymn or story.
Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher
Than his Casella, whom he wooed to sing,
Met in the milder shades of Purgatory.

XIV.

ON THE RELIGIOUS MEMORY OF MRS. CATHERINE THOMSON, MY CHRISTIAN FRIEND, DECEASED DEC. 16, 1646.

WHEN Faith and Love, which parted from thee never,
Had ripened thy just soul to dwell with God,
Meekly thou didst resign this earthy load
Of death, called life, which us from life doth sever.
Thy works, and alms, and all thy good endeavour,
Stayed not behind, nor in the grave were trod;
But, as Faith pointed with her golden rod,
Followed thee up to joy and bliss for ever.
Love led them on; and Faith, who knew them best
Thy handmaids, clad them o'er with purple beams
And azure wings, that up they flew so drest,
And speak the truth of thee on glorious themes
Before the Judge; who thenceforth bid thee rest,
And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams.

XV.

ON THE LORD GENERAL FAIRFAX, AT THE SIEGE OF COLCHESTER.

FAIRFAX, whose name in arms through Europe rings,
Filling each mouth with envy or with praise,
And all her jealous monarchs with amaze,
And rumours loud that daunt remotest kings,
Thy firm unshaken virtue ever brings
Victory home, though new rebellions raise
Their Hydra heads, and the false North displays
Her broken league to imp their serpent wings.
O yet a nobler task awaits thy hand
(For what can war but endless war still breed?)
Till truth and right from violence be freed,
And public faith cleared from the shameful brand
Of public fraud. In vain doth Valour bleed,
While Avarice and Rapine share the land.

XVI.

TO THE LORD GENERAL CROMWELL, MAY 1652,

ON THE PROPOSALS OF CERTAIN MINISTERS AT THE COMMITTEE FOR PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL.

CROMWELL, our chief of men, who through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast ploughed,
And on the neck of crownèd Fortune proud
Hast reared God's trophies, and his work pursued,
While Darwen stream, with blood of Scots imbrued,
And Dunbar field, resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureate wreath: yet much remains
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than War: new foes arise,

Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains.
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose Gospel is their maw.

XVII.

TO SIR HENRY VANE THE YOUNGER.

VANE, young in years, but in sage counsel old,
Than whom a better senator ne'er held
The helm of Rome, when gowns, not arms, repelled
The fierce Epirot, and the African bold,
Whether to settle peace, or to unfold
The drift of hollow states hard to be spelled;
Then to advise how war may best upheld
Move by her two main nerves, iron and gold,
In all her equipage; besides, to know
Both spiritual power and civil, what each means,
What severs each, thou hast learned, which few have done.
The bounds of either sword to thee we owe:
Therefore on thy firm hand Religion leans
In peace, and reckons thee her eldest son.

XVIII.

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEDMONT.

AVEGNE, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they

To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple Tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

XIX.

[ON HIS BLINDNESS.]

WHEN I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

XX.

[TO MR. LAWRENCE.]

LAWRENCE, of virtuous father virtuous son,
Now that the fields are dank, and ways are mire,
Where shall we sometimes meet, and by the fire
Help waste a sullen day, what may be won
From the hard season gaining? Time will run
On smoother, till Favonius reinspire
The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire
The lily and rose, that neither sowed nor spun.

What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,
Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise
To hear the lute well touched, or artful voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?
He who of those delights can judge, and spare
To interpose them oft, is not unwise.

XXI.

[TO CYRIACK SKINNER.]

CYRIACK, whose grandsire on the royal bench
Of British Themis, with no mean applause,
Pronounced, and in his volumes taught, our laws,
Which others at their bar so often wrench,
To-day deep thoughts resolve with me to drench
In mirth that after no repenting draws;
Let Euclid rest, and Archimedes pause,
And what the Swede intend, and what the French.
To measure life learn thou betimes, and know
Toward solid good what leads the nearest way;
For other things mild Heaven a time ordains,
And disapproves that care, though wise in show,
That with superfluous burden loads the day,
And, when God sends a cheerful hour, refrains.

XXII.

[TO THE SAME.]

CYRIACK, this three years' day these eyes, though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot

Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied
In Liberty's defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe talks from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask
Content, though blind, had I no better guide.

XXIII.

[TO THE MEMORY OF HIS SECOND WIFE.]

METHOUGHT I saw my late espoused saint
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from Death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom washed from spot of child-bed taint
Purification in the Old Law did save,
And such as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.
Her face was veiled; yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
So clear as in no face with more delight.
But, oh! as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

NOTES.

SONG ON MAY MORNING.

This piece is generally assigned to the first of May, 1630. Prof. Masson is inclined to date it three years later, thus bringing it within the Horton group of Milton's earlier poems. It certainly associates itself with these through its bright allusions to the spring-time of external nature and of human life; and it gives sure evidence of Milton's "divine ear" for metrical effect. The trochaic effect prevails in the lines in which May is welcomed; compare the welcome to Mirth and Melancholy in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* respectively. The contemplative side of Milton's youth does not here reveal itself; we see rather the spirit of those days

> "When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
> Brisk as the April buds in primrose season."
>
> *Comus*, 670.

1. **morning-star.** The planet Venus, as the morning-star, was called Phosphorus or Lucifer (the light-bringer), and, as the evening-star, Hesperus. Hence Tennyson's allusion—

> "Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
> Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name."
>
> *In Memoriam.*

In *Comus* 93, it is the "star that bids the shepherd's fold," and in *Lyc.* 30, "the star that rose at evening bright." In the last of these passages the pronoun *his* is applied to the star; in this poem (line 2) *her* is used. This is in allusion to the planet as Venus, fit companion for the flowery May.

harbinger, forerunner. This is the current sense of the word; radically, it means 'harbourer,' one who goes before another and prepares a 'harbour' or lodging for him (M.E. herbergeour). The origin of the word is disguised by the intrusion of the letter *n*, as in *messenger* from 'message,' *porringer* from 'porridge,' etc.

2. **Comes dancing from the east.** Compare Spenser's *Astrophel*, iv.: 'The dancing day, forthcoming from the east.' *Dancing* is in adverbial relation to *comes*.

2. **leads with her**: compare the language of *L'Allegro*, 35.

3. **flowery May**, etc. Compare *Son.* i. 4; also Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, '*On Mutability*,' vii. 34:

"Then came fair May, the fairest maid on ground, . . .
And throwing flowers out of her lap around."

4. **yellow cowslip**. In *Lyc.* 147, it is "the cowslip wan,' where the epithet is suited to the context. In *Comus*, 898, we have "the cowslip's velvet head."

pale primrose. In *Comus* 671 (see above) Spring is called "the primrose season." For the explanation of the epithet *pale*, see *Lyc.* 142 and note.

5. **that dost inspire Mirth**, etc., *i.e.* that fillest us with mirth, etc. Compare Spenser, *On Mutability*, vii. (in allusion to May):

"Lord! how all creatures laughed when her they spied
And leapt and danced as they had ravished been!
And Cupid's self about her fluttered all in green."

inspire = breathe in: comp. *Son.* xx. 6, note.

7. **of thy dressing**, *i.e.* dressed by thee. Compare such phrases as 'of thy doing'=done by thee.

8. **Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing**, *i.e.* the hills and the dales rejoice because you have blessed them. *Hill* and *dale* are used generically, and the verb is singular because it is to be supplied with each of the nouns: but see also note on *Son.* xiii. 5. *Boast* is here used transitively.

9. **Thus**, *i.e.* in these words: "this is the form which our early song of salutation takes."

10. **And welcome thee**: compare Chaucer, *Knightes Tale*—

"O May, with all thy flowers and thy green,
Right welcome be thou, fair fresh May."

wish thee long, *i.e.* wish thee to be long or remain long with us.

ON SHAKESPEARE.

These lines were written in 1630, when Milton was twenty-two years of age. They were printed anonymously among the commendatory verses prefixed to the second folio of Shakespeare (1632) under the title "An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet, W. Shakespeare." The poem may have been occasioned by some proposal to erect a monument to Shakespeare; it is more probable, however, that it was a purely spontaneous tribute to the genius of the great dramatist.

1. **What needs**, etc. Here 'what' is equivalent to 'for what' or 'why': compare

> "*What* need we any spur but our own cause?"
> *Julius Cæsar*, ii. 1. 123.

In Elizabethan English *need* is often found with *what*, and in such cases it is sometimes difficult to say whether 'what' is an adverb and 'need' a verb, or 'what' an adjective and 'need' a noun.

> "*What need* the bridge much broader than the flood?"
> *M. Ado*, i. 1. 318.

Either "*Why need* the bridge (be) broader?" or "*What need* is there (that) the bridge (be) broader?" (Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar*, § 297).

2. **The labour of an age**. The Pyramids of Egypt are monuments that may well be described thus; see l. 4.

3. **Or that his**, etc., the construction is, 'What needs Shakespeare that his hallowed reliques should,' etc.

hallowed, sacred.

reliques, remains. This is now commonly written *relics* (Lat. *reliquiae*, remains).

4. **star-ypointing**, *i.e.*, rising far into the heavens. For the form *ypointing*, see note *L'Alleg.* 12; in the very earliest stages of the language the prefix *ge* was not confined to the past participle, being found along with the infinitive and the past tense. But ordinarily it belonged to the past participle, and Milton's use of it with a present participle is peculiar, though not without precedent.

5. **son of memory**. This may mean 'immortal poet,' or 'Muse' (as in *Lyc.* 19), the muses being sometimes called 'daughters of Memory.'

heir of fame: this strengthens and also expands the sense of "son of memory." 'Heir of fame' is one who inherits or possesses fame (Lat. *heres*, an heir or *possessor*). Comp. *Lyc.* 78, where it is said that the true poet cannot be deprived of his meed of fame.

6. **What need'st thou**: see note on l. 1; the object of *need'st* is *witness*.

7. **astonishment**. As the strict sense of *astonish* is 'to stun,' *i.e.* to render incapable of thought or movement, the idea is the same as that expressed by l. 14, and by *Il Pens.* 42, where see notes.

8. **livelong**. Milton first wrote *lasting*, which gives the meaning. The word is a form of *life-long*, but the usage of the two forms is *now distinct*. *Lifelong* means "lasting through life," while *live-*

long merely indicates long continuance, without reference to any definite period. Comp. *L'Alleg.* 99.

9. **slow-endeavouring**, laborious. Milton has perhaps in these lines made a modest reference to his own fastidious mode of composition.

10. **Thy easy numbers flow**, *i.e.* thy numbers flow with ease. 'Numbers,' like the synonymous word *rime* (see note, *Lyc.* 11), is here used for verse. Compare Pope's lines on himself:

"As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came."

Milton alludes to Shakespeare's marvellous ease of composition: the editors of the first folio of Shakespeare said, "His mind and hand went together; And what he thought he uttered with that easiness that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers."

that each heart; the construction is, '*whilst that* each heart,' etc. In Elizabethan English the use of *that* as a conjunctional suffix is very common; we find 'when that,' 'why that,' 'whilst that,' 'though that,' 'since that,' in all of which cases we should now omit *that*.

11. **unvalued book**, *i.e.* invaluable book. See note on *L'Alleg.* 40. Shakespeare has 'unvalued jewels' = jewels whose value cannot be estimated. Shelley, in the opposite sense of *worthless*, has 'unvalued stones' = stones having no value.

12. **Delphic lines**, *i.e.* oracular lines, as if spoken by the greatest of all oracles, viz., that in Apollo's temple at Delphi.

took, taken. This is a form of the past tense used as the past participle. Shakespeare has *took* for *taken*, *shaked* and *shook* for *shaken*, *arose* for *arisen*, etc. Comp. *Arc.* 4.

13. **bereaving**. The construction is, 'bereaving our fancy of itself,' *i.e.* in our efforts to follow your train of thought, we are carried out of ourselves; we become monuments of your power. Compare *Com.* 260.

14. **Dost make us marble**, etc.; we become as insensible as marble to all around us owing to our ecstatic delight in your works. Such testimony to your genius is a far grander monument than the marble tomb of an earthly king. Comp. *Il Pens.* 42; the same idea occurs in the common phrase, "to be *petrified* with astonishment."

15. **sepúlchred**, entombed or commemorated. Comp. Shakespeare's *Sonnet* lxxxi:

"When you entombed in men's eyes shall lie,
Your monument shall be my gentle verse," etc.

The accent in 'sepulchred' is on the penult.

The poem is not a sonnet; it consists simply of eight couplets.

ON THE UNIVERSITY CARRIER.

The two short pieces on this subject bring Milton before us in the mood of L'Allegro, who delights in "quips and cranks and wanton wiles." They were probably written in January, 1631, the date of Hobson's death.

Thomas Hobson was for more than sixty years the University carrier between Cambridge and the Bull's Inn, London; he carried letters, parcels, and sometimes passengers in his waggon. In 1630, owing to the Plague, the authorities forbade Hobson to continue his weekly journeys, and for eight or nine months the old man chafed under this enforced idleness. His health broke down, and when the Plague had abated, he was too ill to resume work. He sickened and died at the age of eighty-six. The witty language of Milton's verses is based chiefly on the analogy between Hobson's almost hum-drum existence and the course of life in general, and on the fact that the "Vacancy" seems to have been the immediate cause of his death. His memory is kept alive not only in Milton's lines, but also in the well-known saying, "Hobson's choice"—an allusion to his practice, in letting out his horses, of compelling the hirer to take that horse which happened to stand next the stable door.

1. **girt,** girth or girdle: all cognate words. The quibbles in the first four lines turn on Hobson's likeness to a horse that has stuck in the mire, and in its struggles has fallen and broken its girth.

3. **twenty to one.** Here *to* seems to have the force of "in comparison with"; 'twenty to one' is used to indicate a high degree of probability. Comp. Abbott, § 187.

4. **slough,** hollow filled with mud, a mire.

5. **'Twas,** familiar idiom for 'he was.' The meaning is that the carrier had so continually shifted from place to place that Death, though it had been 'dodging with' him for ten years, had been unable until now to overtake him.

8. **Dodged with.** 'To dodge' is to move quickly hither and thither; 'to dodge with' another is to follow in his track.

10. **carriage,** carrying. The whole line is a conditional clause.

13. **ta'en up his latest inn,** taken up his final abode.

14. The sense is: 'Death, kindly performing the duties of a chamberlain or attendant at an inn, pointed out to him the room he was to occupy,' etc. 'Chamberlin': properly 'one in charge of chambers or rooms'; the termination *lin* (or *lain*) is a corruption of A.S. *ling*, seen in *lordling*, etc., and must not be mistaken for the purely diminutive termination seen in *duckling*, etc.

ANOTHER ON THE SAME.

3. 'It was so ordained, that he should not die while he,' etc.

4. **might**, was able to, could. This is the original sense of the word, which is the past tense of *may* (A.S. *mugan*, to be able).

5. **Made of sphere-metal**, *i.e.* made of the same metal as the heavenly spheres whose motion is perpetual. Hobson's "revolutions" were between Cambridge and London.

6. **was at stay**, *i.e.* had come to a stop.

7. 'Motion is estimated in time, but (on the contrary) Hobson's time (*i.e.* life) was estimated in motion (*i.e.* in the journeys he made).'

9. **engine**, machine: see note, *Lyc.* 130.

10. **His principles**, *i.e.* principles of motion, moving forces.

straight, straightway. In modern English *straight* is still used as an adverb, as 'He went *straight* to the point'; but to indicate time the adverb *straightway* (compounded of a noun and an adjective) is employed. *Straight* is radically equivalent to '*stretched* or drawn out.'

12. **breathing**. In the same way we speak of a time of leisure as a "*breathing*-space."

14. **vacation** ... **term**. These are University terms punningly applied to Hobson's period of idleness and to the term (Lat. *terminus*) or allotted period of his life.

15. 'He sickened in order to have something to do.'

16. **quickened**, revived: A.S. *cwic*, living.

20. The construction is: 'I vow that if I, the carrier, am put down, I will make six bearers,' *i.e.* six men will be required to carry me to the grave.

21. **Ease** ... **disease**. 'Disease' = want of ease.

22. **He died for heaviness** ... **light**, *i.e.* he died from heaviness of spirit because he was no longer able to load his cart.
'For' = because of; see Abbott, § 149, for examples of this use of *for*. 'That' = because: "since *that* represents different cases of the relative, it may mean 'in *that*,' 'for *that*,' 'because' (*quod*), or 'at *which* time' (*quum*)." Abbott, § 284.

25. '*So that* (as some say) he continued to the very last to cry "More weight," *as if* he were being pressed to death.' There was a mode of torture by which the victim was pressed to death, his sufferings being terminated by 'more weight.'

25. **be**: on this indicative use of *be*, see note, *Epit. on M. of W.* 55, and Abbott, § 300.

28. **He had been**, *i.e.* he would have been.

29. **Obedient to the moon.** As he made four journeys every month, his course was, like that of the tides, governed by the moon.

32. **wain ... increase.** A pun on the two identical sounds—*wain*, a waggon or cart, and *wane*, decrease, applied to the moon in her third and fourth quarters.

33. **His letters**, *i.e.* the letters which he had been entrusted to deliver.

34. **superscription**, *i.e.* Milton's own verses.

AN EPITAPH ON THE MARCHIONESS OF WINCHESTER.

This piece, in the metre of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, was probably written immediately after the death of the Marchioness in 1631. She was the first wife of the fifth Marquis of Winchester, and died in child-birth at the age of 23. The poet-laureate, Ben Jonson, and others lamented her death in verse.

1. **inter**, hold the remains of. This is a peculiar use of the word: when used actively its subject is generally a person or persons, not an inanimate object.

3. **A Viscount's daughter.** She was the daughter of Viscount Savage.

an Earl's heir. Her mother had been the eldest daughter and one of the heirs of Thomas Darcy, Earl of Rivers.

4. **Besides what**, etc. The sense is, 'She was a Viscount's daughter, and an Earl's heir, in addition to all that her virtues added to these earthly honours.' 'Besides,' a preposition, is here a trisyllable.

6. **More than**, etc. This line is explanatory of *what* in line 4.

7. **Summers three times eight**, etc. In prosaic language, 'She was twenty-three years of age.' Dante and Spenser delight in these round-about ways of measuring time.

8. **told**, counted: see note, *L'Alleg.* 67, on this use of *tell*.

alas! too soon, etc. This and the two succeeding lines are *attributive*: "She, who, alas! was too soon to dwell with dark-

ness and with death." 'With darkness and with death' may be regarded as an example of hendiadys, being equivalent to 'in the dark tomb.'

12. **her praise**, *i.e.* praise of her, her fame. Comp. *Lyc.* 76.

13. **Nature and Fate**, etc.; 'Nature and Fate would not then have disagreed,' *i.e.* she would have died in the ordinary course of Nature.

16. **a lover meet**, *i.e.* a husband worthy of her.

17. **The virgin quire**, etc.: 'the bride's maids having called upon Hymen, that god appeared; but his torch burned dimly, and in the marriage wreath which he carried a cypress bud might have been noticed.' See note on *Hymen*, *L'Alleg.* 125.

quire: a band of singers. This is another spelling of *choir* (Lat. *chorus*). The chorus of the Greek drama was a singing as well as a dancing body; it was supposed to represent the sentiments of the audience. *Quire*, a collection of sheets of paper, is a distinct word, which is variously derived from O.F. *quaier*, a small written book, and from Lat. *quatuor*, four.

22. **a cypress-bud**; an omen that the marriage would speedily be followed by a funeral. Cypress garlands were carried at funerals: the name of the tree is said to be derived from Cyprus (comp. note, *Il Pens.* 35).

23. **Once had**, etc. She had already had a son, afterwards the sixth Marquis of Winchester.

24. **To greet her of**, etc., *i.e.* to salute or congratulate her as the mother of a lovely son. 'Of': this preposition is thus frequently used in Elizabethan English to indicate the circumstances of an action, and may be rendered by 'concerning' or 'about' or 'on account of.' Abbott, § 174.

26. **calls Lucina**. Lucina was the Roman goddess who presided over child-birth; her name denotes 'the bringer to light.' Compare Spenser, *F. Q.* II. i., liii:

> "And bade me call Lucina to be near.
> Lucina came: a man-child forth I brought."

28. **Atropos**, etc., *i.e.* Atrŏpos, one of the Fates, who cuts the thread of life, came instead of Lucina: see notes, *Arc.* 65-69, *Lyc.* 75.

30. **at once**, *i.e.* at one and the same time.

fruit and tree, child and mother.

31. **hapless**: unfortunate. The student should note how words like *happy*, *lucky*, *fortunate*, which strictly refer to a person's hap, whether good or bad, have been restricted to good hap: in

order to give them an unfavourable meaning a negative prefix or suffix is used.

33. **languished**, exhausted. Comp. *Com.* 743:

> " If you let slip time, like a neglected rose,
> It withers on the stalk with *languished* head ":

also *Par. Lost*, vi. 496. The suffix *-ed* is frequently used in Elizabethan English where we now have *-ing* (Abbott, § 374).

35. **slip**, a small branch or twig.

36. **Saved ... nip**: comp. *Sams. Agon.* 1576—

> . . . "the first-born bloom of spring
> Nipt with the lagging rear of winter's frost.'

37. **pride of her carnation train**, *i.e.* the pride of the whole garden, the pride of the flowers surrounding the tender slip. On 'train' see *Il Pens.* 10, note; 'carnation' is the name of a particular flower, so called from its flesh-colour (Lat. *caro*, flesh), but it is probably here used merely to denote beauty.

38. **unheedy**, unheeding, careless. Compare Shakespeare,

> " Wings and no eyes figure *unheedy* haste."
> *M. N. D.* i. 1. 237.

The suffix *-y* also occurs where we would now use the present participle in 'slumbery agitation,' *Macbeth* v. 1. 237.

43. **those pearls of dew**, etc. 'Those pearly dew-drops which rest upon the fair blossom prove to be tears shed by the morning as a presage of its speedy death.'

The comparison of dew-drops to tears is frequent in poetry: comp. Chesterfield's *Advice:*

> " Those tears of the sky for the loss of the sun."

46. **hastening funeral**, speedy death. The Latin *funus* = death.

49. **this thy travail**: 'this' and 'travail' are in apposition.

50. **seize**, possess, give possession of. This is a legal sense of the word: comp. *lease*, l. 52.

51. **That**, etc. The construction is, '(You) who, in order to give the world increase, have shortened your own life.'

55. **be**, are. This use of *be* in the indicative is frequent in Elizabethan English, especially with a plural nominative and after *where*, *there*, *here*, etc. It is used with reference to a number of persons or things, regarded as a class. Comp. *Com.* 12, 519, 668.

tears of perfect moan. 'Perfect moan' = sincere or great

sorrow: 'perfect' has its original sense of 'complete,' as in line 73 of *Comus*, "so *perfect* is their misery."

56. **Weept**, wept: another form of the participle. See note, *L'Alleg.* 105.

Helicon, a mountain in Boeotia sacred to the Muses: the tears wept in Helicon are the elegiac verses of the various poets who lamented the death of the Marchioness; comp. *Lyc.* 14, "melodious tear."

57. **And some flowers ... Came.** The construction is 'And *here are* some flowers,' etc. The *flowers* and *bays* referred to are the verses written by Milton (and perhaps by other Cambridge men). The Came is the river Cam; see *Lyc.* 103. The bay or laurel was sacred to Apollo, the god of song.

58. **For thy hearse, to strew the ways**, *i.e.* to strew the ways for thy hearse.

'Hearse' does not here denote 'tomb,' as in line 151 of *Lycidas;* it may be rendered 'bier.' See note, *Lyc.* 151.

60. **Devoted to**, dedicated to.

61. **bright Saint**: comp. *Lyc.* 172-181.

62. **much like to thee in story**, whose story closely resembles yours.

63. **fair Syrian shepherdess**: an allusion to Rachel, the wife of Jacob and the mother of Joseph. Like the Marchioness, she died at the birth of her second child. See *Genesis*, xxix., xxx., xxxv.

66. **served for her before.** Jacob served Laban seven years in order to obtain his daughter Rachel to wife; he was, however, deceived into marrying her sister Leah, and had to serve other seven years before he was allowed to marry Rachel.

68. **Through pangs fled to felicity**: the pangs of child-birth caused her death, and thereby enabled her to enter upon the joys of heaven. Comp. Spenser *F. Q.* II. i. lvi.

"And ended all her woe in quiet death."

On this line Dunster says: 'We cannot too much admire the beauty of this line. I wish it had closed the poem, which it would have done with singular effect.'

72. **Like fortunes**, etc., *i.e.* similar fortunes may make her soul acquainted with thee.

73. **With thee there clad**, etc., *i.e.* with thee who in heaven art clad in dazzling splendour. *Sheen* is cognate with *show*: comp. *Comus*, 893.

74. **Marchioness** and **Queen** are in apposition to *thee.*

ON TIME.

This piece, probably written about the beginning of 1634, bears in Milton's draft the following title—*On Time: to be set on a Clock-case.* It was formerly a common practice to print on the faces of clocks such sentiments as *Tempus fugit* (time flies).

1. **envious Time**; comp. *Son.* ii. 1, "Time, the subtle thief of youth."

2. **leaden-stepping**, tedious. An adjective formed, as it were, from a previous compound noun "leaden-step. Comp. the form of the adjective "rushy-fringed." *Com.* 890.

3. **the heavy plummet's pace.** A 'plummet' is a leaden weight: the word is cognate with 'plumb' (Fr. *plomb*, lead). The poet refers to the weights in a clock which descend very slowly.

4. **And glut thyself**, etc. As in l. 9, Time is represented as devouring all the transitory vanities of this world; afterwards, only Eternity and all things truly good will remain.

9. **when as**: *as* is a conjunctional suffix. See note, *On Shak.* 10.

12. **individual**, indivisible, inseparable. This is the sense of the Latin *individuus*: it is frequent in Milton. See *Par. Lost*, iv. 486, "an *individual* solace."

14. **sincerely**, perfectly; see *Com.* 454, "When a soul is found *sincerely* so," etc.

18. **happy-making sight**: "the plain English of *beatific vision*" (Newton). The phrase 'to whose happy-making sight' depends on 'climb.' Comp. *Par. Lost*, i. 684.

20. **quit**, freed from all this earthly grossness. The word is originally an adjective and is so used here: from it comes the verb 'to quit' = to be *quit* or freed.

21. **Attired**, crowned. The head-dresses of Elizabethan ladies were called 'attires,' and to *attire* oneself was to put on the head-dress: see note, *Lyc.* 146.

22. Those who gain eternal life are said to triumph over Death, Chance, and Time. Compare *Par. Lost*, iii. 338.

L'ALLEGRO AND IL PENSEROSO.

These titles are Italian and may be translated 'the cheerful man' and 'the thoughtful man.' Milton probably chose the words not so much because they exactly expressed the characteristics of the two men represented as because they were less likely to lead to misconception of his meaning than the words 'Mirth' and 'Melancholy.' *Allegro* comes from Lat. *alacer*, from which we have the word 'alacrity,' and there is an air of briskness pervading the whole poem so called; the movement never flags. We have, "*Haste* thee, nymph," etc., l. 25; "Come, and *trip* it," l. 33; "*In haste* her bower she leaves," l. 87; "Out of doors he *flings*," l. 113; and in many other ways animation and buoyancy are indicated. The whole piece, too, is full of sound, from the morning song of the lark to the whispering winds of evening, and from the merry bells of the upland hamlets to the busy hum of men in towered cities. So far, at any rate, the title *L'Allegro* is not at variance with the poet's meaning.

Penseroso, from the same root as *pensive*, avoids the association of ill-humour which belonged to the word 'Melancholy,' though the Italian word *pensiero* means 'anxious' or 'full of care.' Il Penseroso, however, is not full of care; his mind is tranquil and contemplative, and, like the ancient Greek philosopher, he has learned to be able to endure his own company. Solitude is to him the nurse of Contemplation. There is therefore less rapidity and continuity of movement, and fewer sounds in the *Penseroso* than in the *Allegro:* everything in it moves more slowly and quietly.

The two poems are companion pieces, and the student must study them together in order to observe how far the one is the complement, rather than the contrast, of the other. The subjoined analysis may serve to some extent as a guide; it cannot, however, obviate the necessity for careful study of the means by which the poet effects his purpose in each piece. The two pieces may be viewed as pictures of two moods of Milton's own mind—the mind of a young and high-souled student open to all the impressions of nature. They are described by Wordsworth (*Preface*, 1815) as idylls in which the appearances of external nature are given *in conjunction with* the character and sentiments of the observer. They are not mere descriptions of any scene or scenes that actually came under Milton's eye, though there is no doubt that the scenery round Horton has left its traces upon the pictures. Each records the events of an ideal day of twenty-four hours—beginning in *L'Allegro* with the song of the lark and in *Il Penseroso* with that of the nightingale. It is impossible to say with certainty which was written first; but there can be no

hesitation in saying that Il Penseroso is a man much more after Milton's own heart than L'Allegro, *i.e.* he represents a much more characteristic mood of Milton's mind, and the many ways in which this preference reveals itself should not fail to attract the student's notice.

ANALYSIS.

L'Allegro.	Il Penseroso.
1. 'Loathed Melancholy' banished from L'Allegro's presence: (*a*) Her parentage stated. (*b*) Her fit abode described. 1-10	1. 'Vain deluding joys' banished from Il Penseroso's presence: (*a*) Their parentage stated. (*b*) Their fit abode described. 1-10
2. Welcome to 'heart-easing Mirth': (*a*) Her description. (*b*) Her parentage. .. 11-24	2. Welcome to 'divinest Melancholy': (*a*) Her description. (*b*) Her parentage. .. 11-30
3. Mirth's companions. .. 25-40	3. Melancholy's companions. 31-55
4. Pleasures of the Morning: (*a*) The lark's song. (*b*) Other sights and sounds of the glorious sunrise (Allegro being *not unseen* and *out-of-doors*). 41-68	4. Pleasures of the Evening: (*a*) The nightingale's song. (*b*) Other sights and sounds of the moonlit evening (Penseroso being *unseen* and i. *out-of-doors*, then ii. *in-doors*. 56-84
5. Pleasures of the bright Noon-day and Afternoon: (*a*) The landscape. (*b*) Country employments and enjoyments. 69-99	5. Pleasures of the 'Midnight-hour': (*a*) The study of Philosophy. (*b*) The study of Tragedy and other serious literature. 85-120
6. Social pleasures of the Evening—tales told by the fireside. 100-116	6. Lonely pleasures of the stormy Morning. 121-130
7. Pleasures of the Midnight-hour, *while others sleep*: (*a*) The reading of old Romances. (*b*) The reading of Comedy. 117-134	7. Pleasures of the 'flaring' Noon-day (but only in the shade), *until sleep comes*. 131-150
8. Music lulls him to sleep: (*a*) The music suited to his mood; (*b*) Melting music associated with sweet thoughts. 135-150	8. Music wakes him from sleep: (*a*) The music suited to his mood. (*b*) The 'pealing organ' associated with the 'studious cloister.' 151-166
[9. L'Allegro does not look beyond these delights.]	9. Il Penseroso's aspirations. 167-174
10. Acceptance of Mirth. 151-152	10. Acceptance of Melancholy. 175-176

L'ALLEGRO.

1. **Hence**: adverbs, when thus used to convey a command, have the meaning of a whole sentence, *e.g.* hence = go hence; compare the imperative use of away! up! down! etc. 'Hence' represents an A.S. word *heon-an*, where the suffix denotes 'from'; see note on *Arcades*, 3.

loathéd = loathsome, hateful; the adjectival use of the past participle is frequent in Milton, and in Elizabethan English it conveyed meanings now generally expressed by adjectives with such terminations as *-able*, *-some*, *-ful*, etc.; see note on l. 40. Contrast the epithet here applied to Melancholy with that used in *Il Penseroso*, 12.

2. Having personified Melancholy, Milton turns to ancient mythology to find a parentage for her. He makes her the daughter of Night, for 'melancholy' means literally 'black bile,' that humour of the body which was formerly supposed to be the cause of low spirits; in Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* we read: "The night and darkness makes men sad, the like do all subterranean vaults, dark houses in caves and rocks, desert places cause melancholy in an instant." Melancholy being thus associated with darkness, it was natural that Milton should make her the offspring of 'blackest Midnight.' But in classical mythology (Nyx) Night is the wife of Erebus or Darkness, and their children are Æther (Sky) and Hemera (Day). Milton disregards this relationship, and rightly feels that he may alter the ancient tales to suit his own purpose; what can be more natural, therefore, than to justify the epithet 'loathéd' by making Melancholy the offspring of the loathsome monster Cerberus? To have derived her from Night and Darkness would merely have intensified the notion of blackness, and would not have implied anything necessarily abhorrent.

Cerberus was the dog that guarded the gates of Hell, usually described as a monster with three heads, with the tail of a serpent, and with serpents round his neck.

3. **Stygian cave**: the den of Cerberus was on the further bank of the river Styx, at the spot where the spirits of the dead were landed by Charon. Virgil in *Aen.* vi. makes Charon say:

"This is the place for the shadows, for Sleep and slumberous Night,
The bodies of the living may not be ferried in my Stygian bark."

The Styx, literally 'the abhorred,' was the chief river of the lower world, around which it flowed seven times. To swear by Styx was regarded as the most solemn of oaths.

forlorn, desolate: now used only as an adjective. This is the

past participle of the old verb *forleosen*, to lose utterly; the prefix *for* has an intensive force, as in *forswear*.

4. **'Mongst**, common in poetry for 'amongst,' as ''midst' for 'amidst.' 'A' is a prefix = in, and 'amongst' is literally 'in a crowd,' as 'amidst' is 'in the middle.' The adverbs in *st*, as *amongst*, *amidst*, *whilst*, are derived from obsolete forms in *s*, as *amonges*, *amiddes*, *whiles*, which again come from the original adverbs *among*, *amid*, *while*.

horrid shapes, etc. Burton, in *Anat. of Mel.*, associates 'terrors and affrights' with melancholy. 'Shape' may be used here in the sense of Lat. *umbra*, a mere shape or shadow, a departed spirit. Comp. *Il Pens.* 6. 'Unholy' = impure.

5. **some uncouth cell**, *i.e.* some unknown and horrible abode. Radically, 'uncouth' means 'unknown': A.S. *un*, not; and *cuth*, the past participle of *cunnan*, to know. Its secondary meaning is 'ungraceful' or 'ugly,' and in all the cases in which Milton uses this word it seems probable that he has taken advantage both of its primary and its later senses: see *Lyc.* 186, *Par. Lost*, ii. 827, v. 98, vi. 362. In early English 'couth' occurs as a present, a past, and a participle, and it still survives in the word 'could' and in the Scotch 'unco' = strange. Similar changes of meaning have occurred to the words 'quaint,' 'barbarous,' 'outlandish,' etc., because that which is unfamiliar is apt to be regarded unfavourably.

The word 'cell' is used in a similar connection in *Il Pens.* 169.

6. "Where Darkness covers the whole place as with its wings." Darkness is here personified, so that 'his' does not stand for 'its'; on the other hand, if the word 'brooding' is to be taken literally, we should have expected 'her' to be used instead of 'his.' The explanation probably is that Milton makes Darkness of the male sex, like the Lat. *Erebus*, and that 'brooding' is not used literally, but = covering. In the following passage the word seems to partake of both meanings:—

> "On the watery calm
> His *brooding* wings the Spirit of God outspread,
> And vital virtue infused."—*Par. Lost*, vii. 243.

In Tennyson's *Two Voices* we have "*brooding* twilight." The primary sense of 'brood' is 'to sit upon in order to *breed*'; hence a person is said to *brood* over his injuries when his desire is to obtain vengeance.

jealous wings: 'darkness is very properly associated with jealousy or suspicion,' and there may be also an allusion to the watchful care of the brooding fowl. 'Jealous' and 'zealous' are radically the same.

7. **night-raven**: in *L'Allegro* night is associated with the raven, in *Il Pens.* with the nightingale. The raven was formerly

regarded as a bird of evil omen and of prophetic powers: Shelley, in *Adonais*, speaks of the "obscene raven." In Marlowe's *Jewe of Malta* we read—

> "Like the sad-presaging raven that tolls
> The sick man's passport in her hollow beak";

and in *Macbeth*, i. 4—

> "The raven himself is hoarse
> That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
> Under my battlements."

sings, radically = *rings* or resounds, applied by Milton to the strong notes of the raven, as by Shakespeare to the noise of a tempest: "We hear this fearful tempest *sing*," *Rich. II*, II. i. Comp. 'rings,' l. 114.

8. **There**, *i.e.* in the "uncouth cell"; an adverb depending on *dwell*, line 10.

ebon shades, shades as black as *ebony*, *i.e.* total darkness. 'Ebon' is the adjectival form, spelt 'heben' in Spenser. Ebony is a kind of wood so called on account of its hardness (Heb. *eben*, a stone), and as it is usually black, the name has come to be used as a synonym both for hardness and blackness.

low-browed, overhanging or threatening: comp. *Il Pens.* 58. A person with prominent brow is called 'beetle-browed,' *i.e.* 'with biting brows,' brows which project like an upper jaw.

9. **ragged**: Milton represents Melancholy with her hair dishevelled, and her fit abode amongst rugged and disordered rocks. In the English Bible 'ragged' occurs in the sense of 'rugged': *Isaiah*, ii. 21.

10. **In dark Cimmerian desert**, *i.e.* in some desert shrouded in Cimmerian darkness. "In the Odyssey the Cimmerians are a people dwelling beyond the ocean-stream in a land of perpetual darkness; afterwards the name was given to a people in the region of the Black Sea (whence *Crimea*)." (Masson.) The phrase "Cimmerian darkness" is common in English poetry, and Milton can hardly be accused of tautology in speaking of a "dark Cimmerian desert"; he intensifies the notion of darkness.

The student should note by what means, in the first ten lines of the poem, Milton creates so repugnant a picture of Melancholy that the reader turns with relief and delight to the representation of Mirth which follows: these means are:—

1. Accumulation of words conveying associations of horror, *e.g.* blackest Midnight, cave forlorn, shrieks, etc.
2. Imagery that intensifies the horror of the picture, *e.g.* Stygian cave, brooding Darkness, etc.
3. Irregular metre, the rest of the poem being in octosyllabic couplets whose tripping sweetness pleases the ear after

the rougher cadence of lines 1-10. The separateness of these lines is further marked (both in *l'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*) by the peculiar arrangement of the rhymes: the formula is *a b b a c d d e e c*.

11. **fair and free**: both adjectives are frequently found together in English poetry to denote beauty and gracefulness in woman. We find in Chaucer's *Knightes Tale*: "Of *fayre* young Venus, fresh and *free*"; and the words occur in the same sense even before Chaucer's time. Tennyson applies them to a man: comp. "Lord of Burleigh, fair and free."

12. **yclept**, named: past participle of the verb 'to clepe,' from A.S. *clipian*, to call. In English the past participle of all verbs of the strong conjugation was originally formed by the suffix *en* and the prefix *ge*. The suffix *en* has now disappeared in many cases and the prefix *ge* in all. The *y* in 'yclept' is a corruption of *ge*, as in yfallen, yfounde, ygo, ylent, yshape, ywritten, all of which are found in Chaucer. The *y* also took the form *i* in Early English, as imaked, ispoken, iknowen, etc. Shakespeare has yclept, yclad, etc. Milton in one case prefixes *y* to a present participle. See note on *On Shakespeare*, 4.

Euphrosyne (the light-hearted one), one of the three Graces of classical mythology, the others being Aglaia (the bright one) and Thalia (the blooming one). They were represented as daughters of Zeus, and as the goddesses who purified and enhanced all the innocent pleasures of life. Milton desires to signify their service to man more clearly by giving them another genealogy; he suggests two alternatives, and himself prefers the latter:—(1) That they are the offspring of Venus (love) and Bacchus (good cheer), or (2) of Zephyr (the 'frolic wind') and Aurora (the goddess of the morning). From these parents Euphrosyne is begotten in the month of May, *i.e.* "it is the early freshness of the summer morning that best produces Cheerfulness" (Masson).

13. **heart-easing Mirth**: Burton, in *Anat.* of *Mel.*, prescribes "Mirth and merry company" to ease the heart of the melancholy. With 'heart-easing' (compounded of a participle preceded by its object) compare such adjectives as heart-rending, tale-bearing, soul-stirring, etc.

14. **at a birth**, at one birth: the words 'a,' 'an,' and 'one' are all derived from the same Anglo-Saxon word: comp. the phrase 'one at a time.'

16. **ivy-crownèd**: the ivy was sacred to Bacchus, the god of wine.

17. There is a change in the construction here, there being no preceding 'whether' answering to 'whether' in this line: the

meaning is, '*Whether* lovely Venus bore thee, or *whether* the frolic wind,' etc.

some sager sing, *i.e.* some poets have more wisely written. Poets are often called 'singers,' but it is not known to what poets Milton can be referring: probably he merely chose this way of modestly recommending his own view.

18. **frolic wind**, *i.e.* frolicsome wind. The word 'frolic' is now used only as a noun and a verb, never as an adjective. Yet its original use in English is adjectival, and its form is that of an adjective: it is radically the same as the German *fröhlich*, so that *lic* in *frolic* corresponds exactly to the suffix *ly* in *cleanly*, *ghastly*, etc. By the end of the seventeenth century it came to be used as a noun, and its attributive sense being forgotten, a new adjective was formed—frolicsome, from which again came a new noun—frolicsomeness. In *Comus* 59 it is used as an adjective: "ripe and frolic."

breathes the spring: this transitive use of the verb is frequent in Milton, with such objects as 'odours,' 'flowers,' 'smell,' etc.

19. **Zephyr**, the personification of the pleasant West wind: in *Par. Lost*, v. 16, he is represented as wooing Flora—

"With voice
Mild as when *Zephyrus* on Flora *breathes*."

20. '**As**' here introduces a clause of time. 'Once' does not here denote 'on a single occasion' as opposed to the adverb 'often,' but 'at a former time,' as in the phrase 'once upon a time' (Lat. *olim*).

a-Maying, enjoying the sports suitable to May. Comp. the song of Aurora, Zephyr and Flora in *The Penates* of Jonson—

"See, see, O see who here is come a-maying!" etc.

To which May answers:

"All this and more than I have gift of saying
May vows, so you will oft come here a-maying."

Also see *Song on May Morning*, 5.

Even in ancient times there were May sports, when the Roman youth engaged in dancing and singing in honour of Flora, the goddess of fruits and flowers. Formerly throughout England the sports and customs connected with May-day were observed with the greatest zest.

'A-Maying' = on Maying: in O.E. writers after the Norman Conquest the verbal noun with the preposition 'on' was used after verbs of motion, *e.g.* 'he wente on hunting'; afterwards *on* was corrupted into *a*. 'Maying' is, therefore, not a participle used as a noun, but the verbal noun or gerund. The participle originally ended in *ende* or *inde* and the noun in *ung*; but both now end in *ing*, and hence they are often confused.

21. **There**, *i.e.* where Zephyr met Aurora: an adverb modifying 'filled.' The nom. to 'filled' is 'wind,' line 18.

22. **fresh-blown** is compounded of a participle and a simple adverb, 'fresh' being equal to 'freshly': the common adverbial suffix in Anglo-Saxon was *e*, the omission of which has reduced many adverbs to the same form as the adjectives from which they were derived. See note, *Il Pens.* 66.

roses washed in dew: a similar phrase occurs in Shakespeare—

"I'll say she looks as clear
As morning roses newly washed in dew."
Taming of the Shrew, ii. 1. 173.

Comp. also—

"Her lips like roses overwasht with dew."—Greene, *Arcadia.*

24. **buxom**, lively. The spelling of this word disguises its origin; it is *buck-some*, which arose out of the A.S. *bocsum* or *buhsum* = 'easily bowed,' 'flexible' (A.S. *bugan*, to bow, and the suffix *sum*, 'like,' as in 'darksome,' etc.). So that the word first meant 'pliable,' then 'obedient,' then 'good-humoured' or 'lively,' and finally 'handsome.' It is now used ordinarily of the handsomeness of stout persons. In its primary sense it was applied to unresisting substances, *e.g.* "the buxom air" (*Par. Lost*, II. 842), and the transition to the sense of 'obedient' is a natural one: comp. Spenser's *F. Q.* iii. 4—

"For great compassion of their sorrow, bid
His mighty waters to them *buxome* be."

In Shakespeare's *Per.* i. 1 we find—

"A female heir
So *buxom*, blithe, and full of face";

and Milton seems to have recollected this passage.

debonair, elegant, courteous: this word, when broken up, is seen to be a French phrase—*de bon aire*, literally 'of a good mien or manner'; *de* = of, *bon* is from Lat. *bonus*, good, and *aire* = manner. Comp. the use of 'air' in the phrase 'to give one's self *airs*,' *i.e.* to be vain. 'Debonair' has thus been formed out of three words by mere juxtaposition. See note, *Il Pens.* 32.

25. **Haste thee.** In such phrases the pronoun may be said to be used reflectively: comp. 'sit thee down,' 'fare thee well.' In Early English, however, the pronoun was in the *dative*, marking that the agent was affected by the action, but not that he was the *direct object* of it: such a dative is called the ethic dative. In Elizabethan writers the use of *thee* after verbs in the imperative is so common that in many cases its original sense seems to have been lost sight of, and the pronoun consequently seems to be a mere corruption of the nominative *thou*.

25. **Nymph**, maiden: the word denotes literally 'a bride.' In Greek mythology the goddesses haunting mountains, woods, and streams were called nymphs; see line 36.

bring here governs the following words :—Jest, Jollity, quips, cranks, wiles, nods, becks, smiles, Sport, and Laughter, all of which are the names of Mirth's companions. They are personifications of the attributes of happy youth.

26. **Jollity**, from the adjective 'jolly,' light-hearted: its original sense is 'festivity.' It is not etymologically connected with 'joviality' (from Jove, the joyful planet), though its meaning is similar. See note, *Son.* i. 3.

27. **Quips**, sharp sayings, witty jests. Compare "This was a good *quip* that he gave unto the Jewes" (*Latimer*). The word is radically connected with *whip*, 'that which is moved smartly,' and a diminutive from it is *quibble*.

cranks, *i.e.* turns of wit. 'Crank' is literally a crook or bend; hence the word is applied to an iron rod bent into a right angle as in machinery, and to a form of speech in which words are twisted away from their ordinary meaning. Shakespeare uses 'crank' in the sense of a winding passage, *Cor.* i. 1. 141, and (as a verb) = to wind about, i. *Hen. IV.* i. 98; and Milton has, "To show us the ways of the Lord, straight and faithful as they are, not full of *cranks* and contradictions." Whenever language is distorted or used equivocally we have a *crank* in the sense of the above passage.

wanton wiles, playful tricks. 'Wile' is really the same word as 'guile,' which in Earlier English was written 'gile.' Compare ward and guard, wise and guise, warden and guardian; the forms in 'gu' were introduced into English by the Normans.

28. **Nods and becks**, signs made with the head and the finger. The word 'beck' is generally applied to signs made in either of these ways, though Milton here distinguishes them; it is a mere contraction of 'beckon,' to make a sign to, cognate with 'beacon.'

wreathèd smiles, so called because, in the act of smiling or laughing, the features are wreathed or puckered. A wreath is literally that which is 'writhed' or twisted. Compare 'wrinkled care,' l. 31.

29. This line and the next are attributive to 'smiles.' 'Such' qualifies 'smiles,' and the clause introduced by 'as' is relative. *As* after *such* is generally regarded as a relative pronoun. Milton is fond of this construction; see lines 129, 138, 148.

Hebe's cheek: Hebé, in classical mythology, was the goddess of youth, who waited upon the gods and filled their cups with nectar. Later traditions represent her as a divinity who had power to restore youth to the aged. Compare *Comus* 290: "As smooth as Hebe's their unrazored lips."

30. 'And are wont to be found in sleek dimples.' 'Dimple' is literally a little 'dip' or depression: compare *dingle*, *dapple*, etc. For 'sleek'=soft or smooth, see *Lyc.* 99.

31. We speak of Sport deriding or laughing away dull care: compare *Proverbs*, xvii. 22, "A merry heart is a good medicine, but a broken spirit drieth up the bones." See Burton's *Anat. of Mel.*, where Care is said to be 'lean, withered, hollow-eyed, wrinkled,' etc.

32. **Laughter**, here said to be holding his sides, just as, in popular language, excessive laughter is said to be 'side-splitting.' 'Sport' and 'Laughter' are objects of the verb 'bring,' l. 25.

33. **trip it**: 'to trip' is to move with short, light steps as in dancing; 'it' is a cognate accusative, as if we said 'to trip a tripping,' and adds nothing to the meaning of the verb. This use of 'it' is extremely common in Elizabethan writers; Shakespeare has to fight it, speak it, revel it, dance it, etc., where (as Abbott suggests) the pronoun seems to indicate some pre-existing object in the mind of the person spoken of. In other cases, such as queen it, foot it, saint it, sinner it, etc., the pronoun seems to be added to show that the words have the force of verbs.

34. **light fantastic toe**: the toe (or foot) is called 'fantastic' because in dancing its movements are unrestrained or 'full of fancy.' 'Fantastic' is now used only in the sense of 'grotesque' or 'capricious,' but in the time of Shakespeare and Milton *fancy* and *fantasy* (which are radically the same word) had not been desynonymised: this explains why an event that had merely been imagined or 'fancied' is described by Shakespeare as 'fantastic.' 'To trip the light fantastic toe' is a phrase now ordinarily used as='to dance.' Compare *Comus*, 144, 962: "light fantastic round."

36. Liberty is here naturally associated with Mirth: in Burton's *Anat. of Mel.* there is a chapter on "Loss of liberty as a cause of Melancholy." She is here called a *mountain*-nymph, because mountain fastnesses have always given to their possessors a certain amount of security against invasion and oppression, and because nowhere is the love of liberty more keen. Comp. Cowper's lines—

> "'Tis liberty alone that gives the flower
> Of fleeting life its lustre and perfume;"

And Wordsworth—

> "Two voices are there—one is of the sea,
> One of the *mountains*—each a mighty voice;
> In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
> They were thy chosen music, *Liberty*," etc.

37. ***due***: *see* note on *Il Pens.* 155.

38. **crew**, formerly spelt *crue*, is common as a sea-term (being applied to the company of sailors on a ship); and, like many other sea-terms in English, is of Scandinavian origin. Its original sense is 'a company' and it is used here by Milton in this unrestricted sense. The word is common in his poems, but in every other case he uses it in a bad sense, applying it to evil spirits or hateful things. 'To admit of' is 'to make a member of.'

39. **her**, *i.e.* Liberty.

40. **unreproved pleasures free**, free and innocent pleasures. This is a favourite arrangement of words in Milton—a noun between two adjectives: it generally implies that the final adjective qualifies the idea conveyed by the first adjective and noun together; comp. "hazel copses green," *Lyc.* 42; also "native wood-notes wild," l. 134. Unreproved = unreprovable; comp. 'unvalued' for 'invaluable' in Milton's Lines *On Shakespeare*, 11. In Shakespeare we find 'unavoided' for 'unavoidable,' 'imagined' for 'imaginable,' 'unnumbered' for 'innumerable,' etc. (see Abbott's *Shak. Grammar*, § 375). The passive participle is often used to signify, not that which *was* and *is*, but that which *was* and therefore *can be hereafter*.) In much the same way we still speak of 'an untamed steed,' 'an unconquered army,' 'a dreaded sound.' See also note, *Lyc.* 176.

41. **To hear**, like 'to live' in l. 38, is an infinitive of purpose dependent upon the verb 'admit.'

42. **startle** is an infin. dependent, along with 'begin,' upon 'to hear.' Warton notes that there is a peculiar propriety in 'startle;' the lark's is a sudden shrill burst of song, which is often heard just before sunrise and may therefore be said to scare away the darkness. Comp. *Par. Reg.* ii. 279.

43. **watch-tower**: the lark sings high up in the air, so high that, though it may be filling one's ears with its melody, it is often impossible to see the songster. Hence Shakespeare speaks of it as singing "at heaven's gate," and Shelley likens it to a "high-born maiden in a palace *tower*."

44. **dappled**, *i.e.* having the sky covered with small grey clouds: literally, it means 'marked with small *dips*' or hollows; it has no connection with *dab*. See note on l. 30. 'Till' here introduces a clause in the indicative; in line 99 the verb is in the subjunctive mood: see note on *Il Pens.* 44.

45. **Then to come**, etc.: dependent, like 'startle,' upon the verb 'to hear' in l. 41. It refers to the lark which is, at daybreak, to appear at L'Allegro's window to bid him good morning. This is a fancy frequent in poetry—that the morning song of birds is a friendly greeting to those who hear them. The only difficulties connected with this interpretation are (1) that in making the lark alight at the window of a human dwelling Milton seems

to be forgetful of a lark's habits; the ordinary poetical conceit does not apply to this bird, which does not seek man's company, and is a "bird of the wilderness": (2) that the verb 'hear' is usually followed by an infinitive without 'to,' whereas in this case '*to* come' is used. These difficulties disappear if we remember that Milton's references to nature are not always strictly accurate (see notes *passim*); and that 'to come' follows at some distance from 'hear,' thus rendering the introduction of 'to' necessary as a sign of the infinitive.

Prof. Masson, however, rejects this view as nonsense: he says: "The words '*Then to come*' in line 45 refer back to, and depend upon, the previous words '*Mirth, admit me*' of line 38." On this view, it is not the lark, but *L'Allegro* himself, that comes to his own window and bids his friends good morning. This avoids the two difficulties above noticed, but raises others. The question is referred to here merely because, in order to appreciate the arguments, the student must thoroughly master the syntax of lines 37-48.

45. **in spite of sorrow**, *i.e.* in order to *spite* or defy sorrow. 'Spite' is a contracted form of 'despite,' and is cognate with 'despise.' This is a peculiar use of the phrase 'in spite of'; ordinarily, when a person is said to do something in spite of sorrow, it is implied that he did it *although he was sorrowful.* This is obviously not the meaning in this passage, for there is no sorrow in the heart of the lark (or of L'Allegro himself).

46. **bid**: see note on *Lyc.* 22.

47. **sweet-briar** (also spelt brier), a prickly and fragrant shrub, the wild-rose or eglantine.

48. **twisted eglantine.** Etymologically 'eglantine' denotes something prickly (Fr. *aiguille*, a needle), but since Milton has just named the sweet-briar, which is commonly identified with the eglantine, and calls the eglantine 'twisted' (which it is not), it is probable that he meant the honeysuckle. 'Twisted' may properly be applied to creeping or climbing plants.

49. **cock.** The crowing of the cock is universally associated with the dawn; hence Milton speaks of this bird as scattering the last remnants of darkness by his crowing. So in Shakespeare we have a reference to the superstition that spirits vanished at cock-crow. In classical times the cock was sacred to Apollo, the god of the sun, because it announced sunrise. Comp. the Eastern proverb, used to a person to intimate that the speaker can dispense with his services—"Do you think there will be no dawn if there is no cock?"

The adjective 'thin' may be taken as qualifying 'rear': so we speak of the thin or straggling rear of an army as distinct from its close and serried van.

52. **Stoutly struts his dames before**, walks with conscious pride in front of the hens. In Latin we find the cock described as the *gallus rixosus*, pugnacious fowl. Cowper speaks of the 'wonted strut' of the cock. 'Before,' in this line, is a preposition governing 'dames': 'dame' is from Lat. *domina*, a lady.

The bold step of the cock is well expressed by the rhythm of this line in contrast with that of the preceding one.

53. **listening**: this word refers to *L'Allegro* himself: it introduces another of his 'unreproved pleasures' of the morning. The word 'oft' shows that the poet is not recounting the pleasures of one particular morning, but morning pleasures in general.

54. 'The sounds made by the barking hounds and the huntsman's horn joyfully awaken the morning.' Similarly in Gray's *Elegy* the cock-crow and the "echoing horn" are both referred to as morning sounds. Gray was (as Lowell notes) greatly influenced by a study of Milton's poetry.

cheerly, cheerily or cheerfully: in the phrase 'be of good cheer,' we see the primary sense of the word 'cheer,' which is from a French word meaning 'the face.' A bright face is the index of a cheerful spirit.

55. **hoar.** This may imply that the hill appears gray through the haze of distance, or, more literally, that it is white with frost or rime, the hunters being astir before the rising sun has melted the frozen dew (*hoar-frost*). In *Arc.* 98 Milton applies 'hoar' to a mountain in the more usual sense of 'old': comp. 'hoary-headed.'

56. **high wood**, because on the side of a hill. 'Echoing' here qualifies 'hounds and horn.'

shrill. In modern English the use of adjectival forms as adverbs is common; in many cases they represent the old adverb ending in *-e* (see note on l. 22). It must not be supposed, however, that wherever an adjective is used with a verb its force is that of an adverb: *e.g.* "through the high wood echoing *shrill*," or "Hope springs *eternal* in the human breast." Here it is not correct to say that 'shrill' merely means 'shrilly,' and 'eternal' means 'eternally'; the adjectives have a distinct use in pointing to a quality of the agent rather than of the act.

57. **Sometime**, *i.e.* 'for some time,' or 'at one time or other.' The genitive form 'sometimes' has a different meaning = occasionally.

not unseen: see *Analysis* and note *Il Pens.* 65; "Happy men love witnesses of their joy; the splenetic love solitude." Burton, in *Anat. of Mel.*, says of the melancholy: "They delight in floods and waters, desert places, to walk alone in orchards, gardens, private walks," etc.

58. **elms.** Warton notes that the elm seems to have been Milton's favourite tree, judging from its frequent mention both in his Latin and English poems. The scenery in the neighbourhood of Horton may account for this, though it must not be supposed that Milton is in this poem describing any actual scene. Masson says: "A visit to Horton any summer's day ... to stroll among the meadows and pollards by the banks of the sluggish Colne, where Milton must have so often walked and mused, may be recommended to lovers of Literature and of English History."

59. This line is dependent on 'walking': 'right' is an adverb modifying the preposition 'against.' Comp. 'He cut *right* through the enemy,' 'I have got *half* through my work,' etc. 'Against' implies that L'Allegro is walking with his face turned directly to the rising sun.

the eastern gate, a favourite image in poetry for that part of the sky from which the sun seems to issue. In classical mythology the god of the sun was represented as riding in a chariot through the heavens from East to West, and in one of his Latin poems (*Eleg.* iii.) Milton represents the sun as the 'light-bringing' king, whose home is on the shores of the Ganges (*i.e.* in the far East). Comp. "Hark, hark! the lark at Heaven's *gate* sings," *Cymbeline* II. iii.

60. **begins his state**, begins his stately march towards his 'other goal' in the west. Comp. *Arc.* 81, note.

61. **amber light**, amber-coloured light: noun used as adjective.

62. 'The clouds (being) arrayed in numerous colours.' Grammatically, 'clouds' is here used absolutely. In Latin a noun or pronoun in the ablative along with a participle was often used as a substitute for a subordinate clause, and Milton is fond of this construction. Here, line 62 is an adverbial clause modifying 'begins.' In English, the noun is generally said to be the nominative absolute, but in the case of pronouns, the form shows whether the nom. or obj. is used. Milton uses both; comp. "*Him* destroyed, for whom all this was made," and "Adam shall live with her, *I* extinct." Modern writers prefer the nom. case both for nouns and pronouns. In Anglo-Saxon the dative was used.

liveries here refers to dress, as when we speak of a servant's livery. Its primary sense was more general—anything *delivered* or served out, whether clothes, food, or money: a peer was even said to have *livery* of his feudal holdings from the king. As the livery of a servant is generally of some distinctive colour, Milton applies the word to the many-hued clouds. It may also imply that the clouds, as servants, attend their master, the Sun, in his stately march.

62. **dight**, a nearly obsolete word = arrayed: comp. *Il Pens.* 159. It is a short form of *dighted*, from the verb 'to dight' (A.S. *dihtan*, to set in order), which, as Masson remarks, still survives in the Scottish word *dicht*, to wipe or clean.

65. **blithe**: see note on l. 56.

67. **tells his tale** = counts his sheep, in order to find if any have gone amissing during the night. 'Tale' is thus used in the sense of 'that which is *told* or counted,' which was one of its meanings in Early Eng.: A.S. *talu*, a number. In the Bible 'tell' and 'tale' are frequently used in this sense, *Gen.* xv. 5, *Psalms* xxii. 17, *Exod.* v. 18; and in the works of writers nearly contemporary with Milton the words are used of the counting of sheep.

'To tell a tale' may also mean 'to relate a story,' and the shepherds may be supposed to sit and amuse themselves with simple narratives. But, as Milton in the previous lines refers to such rural occupations as are suited to the early morning, and represents each person as engaged in some ordinary duty, it seems likely that in this line also some piece of business is meant, and not a pastime. The morning hours are not usually those devoted to story-telling.

69. **Straight**, straightway, immediately. "There is, in my opinion, great beauty in this abrupt and rapturous start of the poet's imagination, as it is extremely well adapted to the subject, and carries a very pretty allusion to those sudden gleams of vernal delight which break in upon the mind at the sight of a fine prospect" (Thyer). See note, *Univ. Carrier*, ii. 10.

70. Whilst it (*i.e.* the eye) measures the landscape round; sweeps over the surrounding scene. Landscape, spelt by Milton *landskip*, which resembles the A.S. form, *landscipe* = 'landshape,' the aspect or general appearance of the country. The word is borrowed from the Dutch painters, who applied it to what we now call the *background* of a picture. 'Scape' is radically the same as the suffix *-ship*, seen in ladyship, worship, friendship, etc., where it serves to form abstract nouns. 'Round' is an adverb modifying 'measures,' = around.

71. **Russet lawns, and fallows grey**: 'lawn' is always used by Milton to denote an open stretch of grassy ground, whereas in modern usage it is applied to a smooth piece of grass-grown land in front of a house. The origin of the word is disputed, but it seems radically to denote 'a clear space'; it is said to be cognate with *llan* used as a prefix in the names of certain Welsh towns, *e.g.* Llandaff, Llangollen. Comp. *Lyc.* 25. 'Fallow' literally denotes 'pale-coloured,' *e.g.* tawny or yellow: hence applied to land ploughed but not bearing a crop, as it is generally of a tawny colour; and finally to all land that has been

long left unsown and is therefore grass-grown. It is in this last sense that Milton uses it, and as the word has lost all significance of colour (when applied to land) he adds the adjective 'grey' to distinguish it from those fields that are 'russet' or reddish-brown: the former are more distant, the latter nearer at hand. See note l. 55.

72. **stray**: comp. Lat. *errare*, to wander.

73. **Mountains**, along with 'lawns,' 'fallows,' 'meadows,' 'brooks,' and 'rivers,' is in apposition to 'new pleasures,' l. 69.

74. **labouring clouds**, so called because they bring forth rain and storms. The image of clouds resting on the mountain-top is well expressed by Shelley:—

> "I sift the snow on the mountains below,
> And their great pines groan aghast;
> And all the night *'tis my pillow white,*
> *While I sleep* in the arms of the blast."
>
> *The Cloud.*

75. **trim**: comp. 'trim gardens,' *Il Pens.* 50, 'daisies trim,' *Com.* 120. The student should note the prevailing position of the adjectives in lines 71, 75, 76, 126, etc. Where contrast is intended, as in line 76, the two nouns are placed together and the adjectives apart; so in Latin frequently.

pied, variegated. The word literally means 'variegated like a mag*pie*'; it is a common epithet in poetry and is applied by Shakespeare to daisies (*L. L. L.* v. ii.). It is therefore probable that in this passage also 'pied' qualifies 'daisies'; otherwise it might be taken as an attribute of 'meadows.' Comp. *piebald*, applied to animals.

77. **Towers and battlements it** (*i.e.* the eye) **sees**. This thought may have been suggested to Milton by the fact that his eye, in taking in the landscape around Horton, would often light on the towers of Windsor Castle in the distance: comp. *Com.* 935.

78. **Bosomed**, embosomed.

79. Where perhaps some beautiful lady dwells, a centre of attraction. Lines 79 and 80 form an attributive adjunct to 'towers and battlements.'

beauty: see note on *Lyc.* 166.

lies=dwells; comp. *Lyc.* 53, and Shakespeare, 'When the court *lay* at Windsor' (*M. W. of W.* ii. 2).

80. **cynosure**, now applied generally to an object of great interest: so called because the Cynosura, the stars composing the tail of the constellation of the Lesser Bear, was the mark by which the Phoenician sailors steered their course at sea. 'Cynosure' is from the Greek *kynos oura*, a dog's tail: comp. *Com.* 342: "Tyrian Cynosure." A star by which sailors steer is also

called a 'lode-star,' a word which is used metaphorically in the same way as 'cynosure'; comp. "Your eyes are *lode-stars*," *M. N. D.* i. 1.

neighbouring: 'neighbour' is radically 'near-dweller' (A.S. *neah-búr*).

81. **Hard by**, near at hand: 'by'=alongside, an adverb modifying 'smokes'; 'hard' is an adverb of degree modifying 'by.' Comp. the sense of 'by' in the phrases *close by*, *fast by*, *to put a thing by* (*i.e.* aside).

82. **From**: a preposition may, as here, govern an adverbial phrase.

83. **Where**, in which cottage. Corydon, Thyrsis, Thestylis occur frequently in pastoral poetry as the names of shepherds, and Phyllis as the name of a female. See Virgil's *Bucolics*, Theocritus, Spenser, etc.

met: 'having met together, they are seated at their savoury dinner of herbs and other country dishes.'

85. **messes**, dishes of food. 'Mess' originally meant something *placed* on a table (Lat. *missum*): the word here has no connection with 'mess,' a disordered mixture, which is a variant of *mash*.

86. **neat-handed**: 'neat' is a kind of transferred epithet, referring not to the woman's hands but to the appearance of the food prepared by her. So a skilful carpenter may be called 'neat-handed,' a good needlewoman 'neat-fingered,' etc.

97. **bower**, here refers to the cottage. A 'bower' is strictly something *built*, a dwelling-place: it came to be applied to the inner chamber occupied by a lady.

With Thestylis: 'with' here means 'in company with,' a woman being generally employed at harvest-time to assist in binding the corn into sheaves.

89. **Or**. The construction is: '*Either* she leaves her bower to bind the sheaves, *or* (she goes) to the tanned haycock.' This is evidently the meaning; 'she goes' being implied in the previous verb 'leaves.' This construction, by which two nouns or phrases are connected with one verb which really suits only one of them, is common in Milton, and is called zeugma.

earlier season, because the hay-harvest is earlier than the grain-harvest.

90. **tanned haycock**, a pile of dried hay. The word 'cock' (by itself) means a 'small pile of hay': it is radically distinct from the word 'cock' in any other sense.

mead, meadow. The form in *-ow* (comp. arrow, sparrow, marrow, sorrow) is due to an A.S. suffix *-we*.

91. secure, free from care, not fearing harm. This is the primary sense of the word [Lat. *se* (for *sine*) = free from, *cura* = care]: it therefore corresponds exactly to the English word 'care-less.' It is used in this sense in the Bible and in such passages as—

"Man may *securely* sin, but *safely* never."

In Latin *securus* is sometimes applied to that which frees from care. In modern English 'secure' means 'safe,' *actually* free from danger.

92. "Milton again notes a paragraph in the poem, changing the scene. It is now past mid-day and into the afternoon; and we are invited to a rustic holiday among the 'upland hamlets' or little villages among the slopes" (Masson).

upland hamlets: as the poet here introduces us to the primitive amusements and superstitions of village life we may take 'upland' to mean 'far removed from large cities.' The word 'uplandish' was formerly used in the sense of 'rude' or 'unrefined,' because, in the uplands, the refinements of town-life were unknown. Comp. note on l. 5. 'Hamlet' = ham-let, a little *home* (A.S. *ham*): comp. the affix in the names of certain towns—Nottingham, Birmingham, etc.

invite: the object of this verb is not expressed.

94. **jocund,** merry: from the Lat. *jucundus*, pleasant. (It has no radical connection with the words *joke*, *jocular*, as is sometimes stated.)

rebecks. The rebeck was a three-stringed fiddle, played with a bow. The name is the same as the Persian *rabáb*, applied to a two-stringed instrument said to have been introduced into Europe by the Moors. The modern violin has four strings.

95. **many a youth.** 'Youth' = young-th, the state of being young; it is now used both in its abstract and concrete senses: in the latter it applies properly, as here, to a young man.

'Many a' is a peculiar idiom, which has been explained variously. One theory is that 'many' is a corruption of the French *mesnie*, a train or company, and 'a' a corruption of the preposition 'of,' the singular noun being then substituted for the plural through confusion of the preposition with the article. A more correct view seems to be that 'many' is the A.S. *manig*, which was in old English used with a singular noun and without the article, *e.g. manig mann* = many men. In the thirteenth century the indefinite article began to be inserted, thus *mony enne thing* = 'many a thing,' just as we say 'what a thing,' 'such a thing.' This would imply that 'a' is not a corruption of 'of,' and that there is no connection with the French word *mesnie*.

96. **chequered shade.** The meaning may be illustrated by a passage from Shakespeare—

> "The green leaves quiver with the cooling wind,
> And make a chequered shadow on the ground."
> *Titus Andron.* ii. 4.

Comp. "a shadow-chequer'd lawn," Tennyson's *Recoll. of Arabian Nights.*

The radical meaning of 'chequered' or 'checkered' is 'marked with squares' (like a chess-board); hence it is here applied to the ground marked in dark and light. The game of draughts which is played on a chess-board is sometimes called 'checkers.' The word 'check' is derived, through the French, from the Persian *sháh*, a king, the name given to the principal piece on the chess-board: 'chess' is merely a corruption of the plural 'checks.'

97. 'And (to) young and old (who have) come forth to play.' 'Come' is the past participle agreeing with 'young and old.'

to play: infinitive of purpose after a verb of motion; in early English the *gerund* was used, preceded by the preposition *to*.

98. **sunshine holiday**: comp. *Com.* 959. 'Sunshine' is a noun used as an adjective. Milton wrote 'holyday,' which shows the origin of the word. The accent in such compounds (comp. blue-bell, blackbird, etc.) falls on the adjective; it is only in this way that the ear can tell whether the compounds (*e.g.* hóliday) or the separate words (*e.g.* hóly dáy) are being used.

99. **livelong**, longlasting: see *On Shakespeare*, 8, note. For 'fail,' the subjunctive after 'till,' compare l. 44.

100. We have here to supply a verb of motion before 'to,' *e.g.* 'they proceed': comp. lines 90 and 131.

spicy nut-brown ale, a drink composed of hot ale, nutmeg, sugar, toast, and roasted crabs or apples. It was called *Lamb's wool* from its frothy appearance, and Shakespeare refers to it as "gossip's bowl," while another Elizabethan writer calls it "the spiced wassel bowl.'

101. **feat**, exploit, wonderful deed. 'Feat,' like 'fact,' is radically 'something done' (Lat. *factum*). For 'many a,' see l. 95.

102. **Faery Mab.** Mab was the fairy who sent dreams, and hence a person subject to dreams is said to be 'favoured with the visits of queen Mab.' See an account of her powers in this respect in *Romeo and Juliet*, I. iv. Ben Jonson alludes to the liking of the fairies for cream:—

"When about the *cream-bowls* sweet
You and all your elves do meet.
This is *Mab*, the mistress-fairy,
That doth nightly rob the dairy.
She that *pinches* country wenches,
If they scrub not clean their benches.'

Milton's spelling 'faery' comes nearer to the early English word 'faerie,' which meant 'enchantment.'

junkets, also spelt *juncates*. The original sense is 'a kind of cream-cheese served up on rushes' (Ital. *giunco*, a rush): it was then applied to various kinds of delicacies made of cream, then to any delicacy, and finally to a 'merrymaking.' Hence the verb 'to junket,' *i.e.* to revel. Milton here means 'dainties.'

eat: here past tense = ate.

103. **She ... he**, etc. One of the girls tells how she was pinched in her sleep by the fairies (the popular superstition being that only lazy servants were treated in this way), and then a young man tells his experience: at one time he was led astray by the *ignis fatuus*, and at another time he had suffered from the tricks of Robin Goodfellow.

104. The construction is awkward: we may read either (1) 'And he (was) led by Friar's lantern; (he) tells how' etc., or (2) 'And he, (having been) led by Friar's lantern, tells how' etc. The former reading is preferable as it separates the two stories regarding the 'Friar's lantern' and the 'drudging goblin,' but it leaves the verb 'tells' without a subject. This, however, occasionally happens in Milton. The other reading is grammatically easy, but confuses the two stories. A third suggestion is to read *Tales* for *Tells* in line 105, putting a colon at *led*.

Friar's lantern. This refers to the flickering light often seen above marshy ground and liable to be mistaken by the belated traveller for the light of a lamp. It is popularly called Jack o' lantern or Will o' the Wisp. This explains Milton's use of the word 'lantern,' but it does not explain why he should call it 'Friar's' lantern. He may refer to a spirit popularly called Friar Rush, who, however, neither haunted fields nor carried a lantern, but played pranks in houses during the night; he is therefore distinct from Jack o' lantern. 'Friar' is a member of a religious order (Lat. *frater*, Fr. *frère*, a brother).

105. **drudging goblin**: sometimes called Robin Goodfellow or Hobgoblin (or Puck as in Shakespeare). Comp. *Anat of Mel.* I. ii.: 'A bigger kind there is of them (*i.e.* terrestrial demons) called with us *hobgoblins* and Robin Goodfellows, that would in those superstitious times grind corn *for a mess of milk*, cut wood, or do any manner of *drudgery* work, . . . to draw water, dress meat,

or any such thing.' It is to be noted that the individuality of these familiar spirits is often not very clear. Milton confuses Jack o' lantern and Friar Rush, while keeping Robin Goodfellow distinct; Shakespeare does not distinguish Robin Goodfellow, Jack o' lantern, and Puck (see *Midsummer Night's Dream*, ii. 1); while Burton makes Robin Goodfellow a house spirit and speaks of men being "led round about a heath with a Puck in the night." Scott makes the same mistake as Milton, and Ben Jonson in *The Sad Shepherd* introduces 'Puck-hairy' or 'Robin Goodfellow,' a hind. See note on *Il Pens.* 93.

'To drudge' is to perform hard and humble work. 'Goblin,' a supernatural being, generally represented as of small size but great strength; sometimes mischievous, sometimes kindly disposed. In the form *hob-goblin* 'hob' is a corruption of Robin; hence Robin Goodfellow and Hobgoblin are the same.

105. **sweat**; here past tense of a strong verb (O.E. *swat* or *swot*); it is now treated as a weak verb, and the past tense is *sweated*. Comp. such weak verbs as creep, leap, quake, swell, wash, weep, of which the old preterites were crop, leep, quoke, swal, wesh, wep.

106. **To earn**: infin. of purpose.

duly set, *i.e.* placed as the goblin's *due*: 'set' qualifies 'cream-bowl.'

107. **ere**: comp. l. 114 and *Lyc.* 25. 'Ere'=before, now used only as a conjunction or preposition: in A.S. *aer* was an adverb as well, and not a comparative but a positive form=soon.

108. **shadowy flail**; being wielded by a spirit, the flail is here called 'shadowy'=invisible. 'Flail' is from Lat. *flagellum*, a scourge.

hath: Milton always used this older inflexion, and never the form *has*.

109. **end.** The goblin performed in one night a task that ten labourers working a whole day could not have *completed*; end=complete. Notice that 'end' and 'fiend' (pron. *fend*) here rhyme together.

110. Then the lubber fiend lies (him) down. Comp. 'haste thee,' l. 25 and note; 'him' is here reflective.

lubber fiend: 'lubber' is generally applied to a big clumsy fellow, whereas Robin Goodfellow was a small and active fairy, who could scarcely be "stretched out all the chimney's length." Milton may have referred to '*Lob*-lie-by-the-fire, the giant son of a witch mentioned in Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*. Shakespeare calls Puck a '*lob* of spirits.'

111. **chimney's length**, *i.e.* the width of the fireplace or hearth. 'Chimney' in the sense of fireplace is obsolete except in

compounds, *e.g. chimney-piece, chimney-corner.* It now means 'flue' or passage for smoke; as such passages did not exist in Roman houses, the Lat. *caminus* (from which *chimney* is derived) meant a furnace, brazier, or fireplace.

112. **Basks ... strength.** 'To bask' is to 'lie exposed to a pleasant warmth.' The word is here used transitively, its object being 'strength,' and its meaning 'to expose to warmth.'

hairy: an epithet transferred from the person to an attendant circumstance; comp. 'dimpled mirth,' 'wrinkled care,' 'pale fear,' 'gaunt hunger.' Ben Jonson speaks of Puck as being hairy, and strength is often associated with abundant growth of hair: see *Samson Agonistes, passim.*

113. **crop-full**, with well-filled stomach. The 'crop' is the first stomach of fowls.

flings, *i.e.* flings himself, darts. This verb is one of a number that may be used reflectively without having the reflective pronoun expressed: comp. 'he *pushed* into the room,' 'he has *changed* very much,' etc.

114. **first cock**; because one cock sets the others a-crowing.

matin, morning call (Fr. *matin*, morning); comp. *Par. Lost*, v. 7, "The shrill matin-song of birds on every bough." In *Par. Lost*, vi. 526, it occurs as an adjective, and in *Hamlet* Shakespeare uses it as a noun=morning: "The glow-worm shows the *matin* to be near." The word *matins* is now used for morning prayers.

115. **Thus done the tales.** Absolute construction (as in l. 62) =The tales (being) thus done, they (*i.e.* the villagers) creep to bed.

116. **lulled**=being lulled, attributive to 'they.'

117. **Towered cities ... then.** 'Then' does not here denote 'afterwards' as it does in line 100; it marks a transition from mirth in the country to mirth in the city, and the poet now recounts the entertainments of city life, as L'Allegro might read of them in romances and tales of chivalry. This explains the allusions to 'throngs of knights,' contests of 'wit or arms,' 'antique pageantry,' etc. These are not the events of one day except in the sense that L'Allegro might, on his return from the village rejoicings, retire to his own room to read about them.

'Towered,' having towers (Lat. *turrita*, an epithet which Milton himself applied to London in one of his Latin Elegies). Comp. *Arc.* 21. There is no doubt that the poet, during his stay at Horton, paid occasional visits to London, and Warton infers from expressions in the first Elegy that he had in his youth enjoyed the theatre.

118. **hum**, nominative, along with 'cities,' to 'please.'

119. **knights and barons**: it is interesting to note the original meaning of these and other words that are now titles of rank. 'Knight'=A.S. *cnilt*, a youth; 'baron' meant at first no more than 'man' or 'husband'; 'duke'=Lat. *dux*, a 'leader'; 'count' is really Lat. *comes*, a companion; and 'earl' is Old Saxon *erl*, a man.

120. **weeds**, garments. Comp. the use of the word by Shakespeare—

> "I have a woman's longing
> To see great Hector in his *weeds of peace*."
> *Tr. and Cres.* iii. 3.

'Weeds of peace' denotes the ordinary dress as opposed to 'weeds of war,' *i.e.* armour, etc. The use of the word is now generally confined to the phrase 'a widow's weeds,' *i.e.* a widow's mourning dress. Comp. *Comus*, 16, 189, 390.

high triumphs, grand public entertainments, such as masques, pageants, processions, tournaments, etc. Comp. *Sams. Agon.* 1312 and Bacon's Essay *Of Masques and Triumphs*. Such exhibitions were extremely popular from the time of Henry VIII. to Charles I. See *Arcades*, introductory note.

121. **store of ladies**, many ladies. The word 'store' is found in this sense in Sidney, Spenser, and others. It is now applied only to inanimate objects to denote abundance.

122. **Rain**, pour forth. 'To rain' in the sense of 'to pour forth in abundance' is a common expression: comp. 'to stream,' 'to shower,' 'to overflow.'

influence. This word is now chiefly used in the sense of 'power' or 'authority,' but a trace of its original meaning still remains in such phrases as 'magnetic influence,' 'the influence (*i.e.* inspiration) of the Spirit.' Its literal meaning is *a flowing in* (Lat. *in*, and *fluere*, to flow), and in this sense it was used in astrology to denote "a flowing in, an *influent* course of the planets, their virtue being infused into, or their course working on, inferior creatures." This was originally the only meaning of the word, and in this sense Milton and Shakespeare employ it: in this passage it implies that the bright eyes of the ladies were like the stars in 'working on' those upon whom their glances fell.

Burton, in *Anat. of Mel.*, says: 'Primary causes are the heavens, planets, stars, etc., by their *influence* (as our astrologers hold) producing this and such like effects.' It is well to remember how strong a hold the belief in astrology had (and still has) on the human mind; up to the end of the eighteenth century the almanacs in common use in England were full of astrological rules and theories, and even an astronomer like

Kepler was not entirely free from belief in such matters. It is not surprising, therefore, that the science of astrology has left its traces on the language in such words as 'influence,' 'disastrous,' 'ill-starred,' 'ascendency,' etc. Comp. notes on *Arc.* 52, *Il Pens.* 24.

judge the prize, adjudge or award the prize. We may take 'eyes' as nominative to both of the verbs 'rain' and 'judge,' the ladies showing by their eyes whom they regard as the victor. But Milton occasionally connects two verbs rather loosely with one noun, just as he, on the other hand, makes one verb refer by zeugma to two nouns in different senses. We may therefore read, '*who* judge,' the relative being implied in 'whose,' l. 121. Comp. *Il Pens.* 155, *Lyc.* 89.

123. **Of wit or arms**: comp. 'gowns, not arms,' *Son.* xvii. The contests of *wit* in which ladies were the judges may be those 'Courts of Love' which were so popular in France until the end of the fourteenth century and had so great an influence on the poetical literature both of France and England. The contests of *arms* may refer to those tournaments in which mounted knights fought to show their skill in arms, the victor generally receiving his prize at the hands of some fair lady. Comp. *Il Pens.* 118.

124. **her grace whom**, *i.e.* the grace of her whom. The relative pronoun here relates, not to the noun preceding it, but to the substantive implied in the possessive pronoun. His, her, etc. being genitives = of him, of her, etc., they have here their full force as pronouns, and are not pronominal adjectives (as they are sometimes called). The same idiom is found in Latin, *e.g.* *mea scripta timentis*, 'my writings who (I) fear' = the writings of me who am in fear. Comp. *Arc.* 75, *Son.* xviii. 6. *Grace* = favour.

125. **Hymen ... in saffron robe.** Hymen, being the god of marriage, Milton here refers to elaborate marriage festivities which often included masques and other spectacles: comp. Ben Jonson's *Hymenaei*, where Hymen enters upon the stage 'in a *saffron-coloured* robe, his under vestures white, his socks *yellow*, a *yellow* veil of silk on his left arm, his head crowned with roses and marjoram, in his right hand *a torch* of pine-tree.' Comp. Milton's fifth Elegy, 105:

> Exulting youths the Hymeneal sing,
> With Hymen's name, roofs, rocks, and valleys ring;
> He, new attired, and by the season drest
> Proceeds, all fragrant, *in his saffron vest.*
> (*Cowper's translation*).

In works of art, Hymen is represented as a youth bearing a *torch*. Milton uses 'taper,' now restricted to a small wax-

candle ; from this use we get the adjectives 'taper' = taper-like, long and slender, and 'tapering.' The radical sense of 'taper' is 'that which glows or shines.'

125. **appear** : after the verb *let* the simple infinitive without *to* is used : let Hymen (to) appear.'

127. **pomp and feast and revelry** : these words depend upon the verb 'let.' Milton here used the word 'pomp' in its classical sense (Greek *pompé*) = an imposing procession. Comp. *Sams. Agon.* 1312, and note on l. 120.

128. **mask** : see introductory note on *Arcades*.

antique pageantry, representations or emblematic spectacles in which mythological characters were largely introduced. 'Pageantry' is an interesting word. The suffix *-ry* has a collective or comprehensive force (which has gained in some cases an abstract sense) as in cavalry, infantry, poetry, etc. *Pageant* meant (1) a moveable platform ; then (2) a platform on which plays were exhibited; hence (3) the play itself; and (as the plays first exhibited in this way made large use of spectacular effect) (4) a spectacle or show.

'Antique,' belonging to earlier times (Lat. *antiquus*, also spelt *anticus*). This word has gone through changes of meaning similar to those of the word 'uncouth' (see l. 5), viz. (1) old, (2) old-fashioned or out of date, and hence (3) fantastic : there is, however, this difference—that while 'uncouth' has had all three senses, 'antique' has had only the two first, the third being taken by the form 'antic.'

129. **Such sights**, etc. These words stand in apposition to 'pomp,' 'feast,' etc. Some suppose that Milton here refers to the early works of Ben Jonson, who was a prolific writer of masques. But surely they have a deeper significance ; they imply that the imagery of the poem is not that of mere recollection, but the product of a youthful nature, full of joyous emotion, and affected by circumstances of time and place. A youthful poet, a haunted stream, and a summer evening form a combination that does not lead to mere description.

131. **Then to the well-trod stage**, *&c.* 'let me go' : this means that L'Allegro turns from the stories of chivalry to the comedies of Shakespeare and Jonson : comp. note l. 117. By calling the stage 'well-trod' Milton may hint at the abundance of dramatic literature.

anon, soon after (A.S. *on án*, in one moment) : an adverb modifying the verb of motion understood.

132. **Jonson's learnèd sock**. Ben Jonson (1574-1637) was alive when Milton paid him this compliment. There is no doubt that Milton must have admired Jonson for his classical learning and for his lofty sense of the poet's task. He calls him 'learned' on

account of the profuse display of classical knowledge and dramatic art in his comedies and masques. On this point he is often contrasted with Shakespeare. Hazlitt says: "Shakespeare gives fair play to nature and his own genius, while the other trusts almost entirely to imitation and custom. Shakespeare takes his groundwork in individual character and the manners of his age, and raises from them a fantastical and delightful superstructure of his own; the other takes the same groundwork in matter-of-fact, but hardly ever rises above it." Fuller compares Jonson to a Spanish galleon and Shakespeare to an English man-of-war: "Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning; solid but slow in his performances. Shakespeare, like the latter, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention."

sock: here used as emblematic of comedy in general. as 'buskin' is used of tragedy (comp. *Il Pens.* 102). The sock (Lat. *soccus*) was a kind of low slipper worn by actors in the comedies of ancient Rome. 'Sock' here cleverly refers to Jonson's liking for the classical drama: it was, less fittingly, used by Jonson himself of Shakespeare.

133. **Or** (if) **sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child**, etc. Milton speaks of Shakespeare with reference only to his comedies and to that aspect of them that would appeal most readily to the cheerful man. A comedy like *Measure for Measure* could hardly be adequately characterised as 'native wood-notes wild,' but such a comedy would no more accord with the mood of L'Allegro than the tragedy of *Hamlet*. Milton's language here is sufficiently accounted for by the fact that he is contrasting Shakespeare as master of the romantic drama with Jonson as master of the classical drama, that he is paying a tribute to his striking natural genius ('native wood-notes'), and that he regards him as indeed a poet, being 'of imagination all compact' ('Fancy's child'). L'Allegro cannot be expected to use the language of the lines *On Shakespeare*: he represents a special mood of the human spirit, a mood with which Milton is not so fully in sympathy as that of *Il Penseroso*. 'Fancy' (Phantasy) is here used in a less restricted sense than now: we would now use 'Imagination.' The student should note the pleasing rhythm and alliteration of lines 133, 134.

135. **against eating cares**, to ward off gnawing anxiety. It is a common figure to speak of care or sorrow eating into the heart as rust corrodes iron. Comp. Lat. *curas edaces*, Horace, *Odes*, ii. 11; *mordaces sollicitudines*, *Odes*, i. 18. The preposition 'against, from the notion of counteraction implied in it, has a variety of uses: comp. 'he fought against (in opposition to) the enemy'; 'he toiled against (in provision for) my return.'

136. Milton now refers to the delights of music, and it is well to notice how he 'marries' the sound to the sense by the recurrence of the *liquid* or smooth-flowing consonants (l, m, n, r) in lines 136-144.

Lap me, let me be wrapped or folded: 'lap' is a mere corruption of 'wrap.' Comp. *Comus*, 257: "lap it in Elysium."

Lydian airs, soft and sweet music. "Of the three chief musical modes or measures among the ancients, the Dorian, Phrygian, and Lydian, the first was majestic (*Par. Lost*, i. 550), the second sprightly, the third amorous or tender." Comp. *Lyc.* 189.

137. **Married to**, associated with. Comp. Wordsworth—

"Wisdom *married* to immortal verse."—*Excurs.* viii.

Shakespeare (*Sonnet* cxvi.) speaks of 'the *marriage* of true minds.' By a similar metaphor we say that a person is *wedded* to a habit or a theory.

"Immortal verse" is poetry which, like that of Milton himself, "the world should not willingly let die"; see *Comus*, 516.

138. 'Such as may penetrate the soul that meets it or sympathises with it.' Comp. Cowper—

"There is in souls a sympathy with sounds,
And as the mind is pitched, the ear is pleased
With melting airs or martial, brisk or grave."

In this line 'pierce' rhymes with 'verse.'

139. **bout**, a turn or bend, referring here to the melody. 'Bout' is another form of 'bight,' and is cognate with 'bow.'

140. **long drawn out**: the scansion of this line will show its appropriateness to the sense. 'Long,' an adverb modifying 'drawn out.'

141. **wanton heed and giddy cunning**: the music, in order to be expressive, must be free or unrestrained, yet correctly and skilfully rendered. 'Wanton heed' and 'giddy cunning' are examples of oxymoron. 'Cunning' = skill (A.S. *cunnan*, to know, be able), now used in the restricted sense of 'wiliness.' Comp. the similar degradation of meaning in *craft*, originally 'strength'; *artful*; *designing*; etc.

142. **voice**, here absolute case along with the participle 'running': comp. l. 62, note. For the sense of 'melting' comp. *Il Pens.* 165.

mazes, the intricate or difficult parts of the music.

143. **Untwisting all**, etc.: comp. note on *Arc.* 72. The harmony that is in the human soul is generally deadened or imprisoned, and it is only by sweet music or some other stimulus that touches a chord within us that the hidden harmony of the soul reveals itself. See Shakespeare, *Mer. of Venice*, v. 1. 61.

145. **That**, so that: the use of 'that' instead of 'so that' to introduce a clause of consequence, is common in Elizabethan writers and in Milton himself.

Orpheus' self: 'Orpheus himself' we should now say. 'Self' was originally an adjective = 'same,' in which sense it is still used with pronouns of the third person (as *himself*, *herself*). Then it came to be regarded as a substantive, and was preceded by the possessive pronouns or by a noun in the possessive case (as *myself*, *ourselves*, *Orpheus' self*). In the latter sense it is not used with pronouns of the third person: we cannot say *his-self*, but *him-self*.

Orpheus, "in the Greek mythology, was the unparalleled singer and musician, the power of whose harp or lyre drew wild beasts, and even rocks and trees, to follow him. His wife Eurydice having died, he descended into Hades to recover her if possible. His music, charming even the damned, prevailed with Pluto (the god of the lower world), who granted his prayer on condition that he should not look on Eurydice till he had led her completely out of Hades and into the upper world. Unfortunately, on their way upwards, he turned to see if she was following him; and she was caught back" (Masson). Comp. *Il Pens.* 105, *Lyc.* 58.

heave, raise, lift up: comp. *Comus*, 885: "heave thy rosy head."

146. **golden slumber.** 'Golden' may here mean simply 'happy,' or it may be used because Orpheus is amongst the gods. Homer often applies 'golden' to that which belongs to the gods. Comp. *aurea quies*, in Milton's *Eleg.* iii.

147. **Elysian flowers**: Elysium was the abode of the spirits of the blessed, where they wandered amidst flowers and beauties of every kind. Comp. *Com.* 257, 996.

148. 'Such music as would have moved Pluto to set Eurydice completely free.' In *Quint. Nov.* 23, Milton calls Pluto *summanus*, chief of the dead.

149. **to have quite set free**: 'to have set' is here infinitive of result, and the perfect tense denotes something that had not been accomplished and is no longer possible: comp. the meanings of 'he hoped *to be* present' and 'he hoped *to have been* present.' *Quite* = unconditionally or completely.

150. **Eurydice**: see note on l. 145 above; also *Il Pens.* 105.

151. These delights, etc.: the last two lines of the poem recall the closing lines of Marlowe's *Passionate Shepherd*—

> "If these delights thy mind may move,
> Then live with me and be my love."

Milton here accepts the mood of Mirth, but only on the condition that its pleasures are such as he has enumerated.

IL PENSEROSO.

1. **Hence**: comp. note on *L'Allegro* 1. The opening lines recall certain lines by Sylvester—

> "Hence, hence, false pleasures, momentary joyes,
> Mocke us no more with your illuding toyes!"

vain deluding Joys: 'vain' is the Lat. *vanus*, empty, which is always opposed to *vera*, true. In *L'Allegro* the poet has described true mirth; and now 'to commendation of the true, he joins condemnation of the false.' 'Deluding' is deceitful, not what it appears to be.

2. These 'Joys' are said to be the brood (*i.e.* breed or offspring) of Folly by no father, in order to imply that they are the product of pure or absolute foolishness; they are by nature essentially and altogether foolish. So the goddess Night, one of the first of created beings, is said by Greek poets to have given birth without a husband to Death, Dreams, Sleep, etc.

Notice the use of the cognate words 'brood' and 'bred' in the same line.

3. **How little you bested**; of how little avail you are. 'Bested' is the present indicative, but the past participle is the only part of the verb now in common use, as in the phrase 'to be hard bestead,' *i.e.* to be in sore need of help. 'To stead' occurs frequently in Shakespeare in a transitive sense = to profit, to assist, but the word 'stead' now occurs only in phrases, *e.g.* 'to stand in good stead,' and in compounds, *e.g.* *stead*fast, *steady*, home*stead*, bed*stead*, in*stead*, etc.: comp. names of places, *e.g.* Hampstead, Kronstadt, etc. Its root is the verb 'stand,' and its literal sense is 'place.'

4. **fill the fixèd mind**: satisfy the thoughtful or sober mind; comp. Spenser's *F. Q.* iv. 7.

toys, trifles. In the *Anat. of Mel.* we read of persons who "complain of *toys*, and fear without a cause."

5. **idle brain**, foolish mind. The Old Eng. *idel* means 'empty or vain'; in this sense we speak of 'an *idle* dream.' 'Brain' may be used here for mind, but it may be noted that, just as melancholy was supposed to be due to a certain humour of the body, so 'a cold and moist brain' was believed to be an inseparable companion of folly.

6. **fancies fond**, foolish imaginations. 'Fond' has here its primary sense of 'foolish,' *fonned* being the past participle of an old verb *fonnen*, to be foolish. It is now used to express great liking or affection, the idea of folly having been almost lost, except in certain uses of the word in the north of England and in Scotland. Chaucer uses *fonne* = a fool, and *fondling* is still

used either as a term of endearment or to denote a fool. It may be noted that in a similar way the word *dote* originally meant 'to be silly' and now 'to love excessively.' Comp. *Lyc.* 56, *Son.* xix. 8, *Sams. Agon.* 1686.

6. **possess,** occupy, fill: 'occupy the imaginations of the foolish with gaudy shapes or appearances.' In the English Bible we read of "a man *possessed* of a devil," *i.e.* occupied by an evil spirit.

For 'shapes,' comp. *L'Alleg.* 4.

7. **thick,** abundant, close together, here qualifying 'shapes': comp. "thick-coming fancies," *Macbeth,* v. 3. The different senses of the word are seen in 'thick as hail,' 'thick fluid,' 'thickly populated,' 'thick-head,' thick-skinned,' 'a thick fog,' 'a thick stick,' etc.

8. **motes,** particles of dust: here called 'gay' because dancing in the sunbeam. See *Matt.* vii. 3.

people the sun-beams. The specks of dust are said to people or occupy the sunbeams because it is chiefly in the direct rays of the sun that they become visible. By using the verb 'to people' Milton strengthens the comparison between them and the shapes or images that occupy the idle imagination.

9. **likest,** adj. superlative degree, qualifying 'shapes.' 'Like' is now an exception to the rule for the formation of the comparative and superlative forms of monosyllabic adjectives: we say 'more like,' 'most like.' But, in Milton's time, there was greater grammatical freedom, and in *Comus,* 57 he uses "more like." He also has such forms as resolutest, exquisitest, elegantest, moralest, etc., which according to present usage are inadmissible. In such phrases as 'like his father,' 'like' has come to have the force of a preposition, but in the phrase 'likest hovering dreams,' the noun is governed by 'to' understood, as in Latin it would be in the dative case.

10. **fickle pensioners ... train,** inconstant attendants of sleep. Morpheus, the son of Sleep and the god of Dreams: the name means literally 'the shaper,' he who creates those shapes or images seen in dreams. Morpheus was generally represented with a cup in one hand and in the other a bunch of poppies, from which opium is prepared: hence the word 'morphia.'

'Pensioners,' followers. Queen Elizabeth had a bodyguard of handsome young men of noble birth, whom she styled her *Pensioners.* A 'pensioner' is strictly one who receives a pension, and hence a dependent. 'Train,' something *drawn* along (Lat. *traho,* to *draw*); hence train of a dress (line 34), of carriages, of followers.

See note on *L'Allegro,* 10, regarding the imagery and metre of the first ten lines of this poem.

11. **hail!** an old form of salutation, meaning 'may you be in *health*': the word is cognate with hale, heal, etc.

12. **divinest.** The superlative degree of adjectives is often used in Latin to mark a high degree of a quality, when the thing spoken of is not compared with the rest of a class. This is the *absolute* use of the superlative, as here.

13. **visage,** face, mien (Lat. *visum,* 'that which is seen'). The word is now mostly used to express contempt.

14. **To hit the sense,** etc.: to be distinguishable by human eyes. It is a fact that light may be of such intensity that the sense of sight loses all discriminative power. So we speak of a 'blinding' flash of light. For the use of the verb 'hit' compare *Arcades,* 77; in *Antony and Cleop.* ii. 2 Shakespeare speaks of a perfume *hitting* the sense of smell. The expression is obsolete.

15. **weaker view,** feeble power of vision. 'Weaker' is used absolutely: comp. 'divinest,' l. 12, and 'profaner,' l. 140. This is also a Latin usage.

16. **O'erlaid,** overlaid, covered, in order to reduce the intensity of the brightness of Melancholy's face. Milton thus skilfully converts the association of blackness and melancholy, which in *L'Allegro* makes her repulsive, into an expression of praise, and at the same time connects Melancholy with Wisdom—one of the purposes of the poem. In the *Anat. of Mel.* there is a reference to the disputed question whether 'all learned men, famous philosophers, and lawgivers have been melancholy.'

Comp. *Exodus,* xxxiv. 29, where Moses is said, after having been in God's presence, to have covered his face with a veil in order that the children of Israel might be able to look upon him.

staid, steady, sober, grave: the root is 'stay.'

17. **Black, but** etc. There is an ellipsis here, the construction being: (It is true that she is) black, but (it is) such black as might become a beautiful princess like Prince Memnon's sister.

such as: see note on *L'Alleg.* 29: comp. lines 106, 145.

in esteem, in our estimation. 'Esteem' as a verb is now used only to express high regard for a person; but the noun, though chiefly used in the same sense, may be used along with adjectives which convey a contrary meaning, *e.g.* poor esteem, low esteem, etc. 'Esteem,' 'aim,' and 'estimate' are cognate (Lat. *aestimo*).

18. **Prince Memnon's sister**: Memnon, the son of Tithonus and Eos (Aurora), was king of the Ethiopians, and fought in aid of Priam in the Trojan war; he was killed by Achilles. Though dark-skinned, he was famous for his beauty, and his sister (Hemera) would presumably be even more beautiful. The

morning dew-drops were said by the ancient Greeks to be the tears of Aurora for her dead son, Memnon.

18. **beseem**, suit, become. This is the original sense of the simple verb *seem*; compare the adjective *seemly* = becoming, decent. 'Beseem' here governs 'sister' and 'queen.'

19. **starred Ethiop queen**: Cassiopea, wife of Cepheus, king of Ethiopia. According to one version of her story, she boasted that the beauty of her daughter Andromeda exceeded that of the Nereids; according to another version (adopted by Milton) it was her own beauty of which she boasted. For her presumption Ethiopia was ravaged by a sea-monster, from whose jaws Andromeda was saved by her lover Perseus. After death both mother and daughter were *starred*, *i.e.* changed into stars or constellations. This is probably why Milton calls the former 'starred': it might, however, mean 'placed amongst the stars,' or even 'adorned with stars,' as she was so represented in old charts of the heavens.

20, 1. **above the Sea-Nymphs**: this is an instance of elliptical comparison (*comparatio compendiaria*), the full construction being, 'to set her beauty's praise above (that of) the Sea-Nymphs.'

21. 'And (by so doing) offended their powers.' 'Powers' = divinities (Lat. *numina*).

22. **higher far descended**, far more highly descended. 'Higher' is an adverb modifying 'descended.' 'To be of high descent' = 'to be of noble birth.'

23. **Thee** is the object and Vesta the nom. of 'bore.'

bright-haired: with this compound adjective compare neat-handed, smooth-shaven, civil-suited, dewy-feathered, wide-watered, fresh-blown, high-embowed, etc., all of which occur in these poems. They consist of an adjective and a participle, the adjective representing an adverb.

Vesta. As in the case of Mirth, Milton gives Melancholy that genealogy which he thinks best suited to his purpose. Vesta, among the Romans, was the goddess of the domestic hearth; every dwelling was, therefore, in a sense a temple of Vesta. Her symbol was a fire kept burning on her altar by the Vestals, her virgin priestesses; and by making her the mother of Melancholy, Milton signifies that the melancholy of Il Penseroso is not the gloominess of the misanthrope nor the unhappiness of the man of impure heart, but the contemplative disposition of a pure and sympathetic soul.

long of yore, long years ago. 'Of yore' is an adverbial phrase like 'of old' and is modified by 'long.' The original sense of 'yore' is 'of years,' *i.e.* in years past.

24. **solitary Saturn.** The Romans attributed the introduction of the habits of civilized life to Saturn, the son of Uranus and Terra, and it seems to be for this reason that Milton makes Vesta, the pure goddess of the hearth, his daughter. He is called 'solitary' either because he devoured his own offspring or because he was dethroned by his sons; in either case it is clear that Milton signifies that Melancholy comes from Solitude or Retirement. In astrology the planet Saturn was supposed, by its influence, to cause melancholy, and persons of a gloomy temperament are said to be *Saturnine;* in the old science of palmistry also, there was a line on the palm of the hand called the Saturnine line, which was believed to indicate melancholy.

25. **His daughter she**; she was his daughter. Some editors read 'she (being) his daughter,' making the construction absolute. But it must be remembered that in Latin the noun or pronoun in the absolute clause cannot be the subject or object of the principal clause, as it would be here; and, further, the punctuation favours the view that 'his daughter she' is to be taken as an independent clause.

26. **was not held a stain,** was not considered to be a reproach. Mythological genealogies are apparently governed by no law. 'Held' is here a verb of incomplete predication.

27. **Oft,** original form of 'often,' which was at first used only before vowels or the letter *h*: comp. *L'Allegro,* 53.

glimmering ... glades. 'Glimmer' is a frequentative of 'gleam,' *i.e.* gleaming at intervals. 'Glade' is an open space in a wood.

29. **woody Ida.** This probably refers to Mt. Ida in the island of Crete; Zeus or Jupiter was said to have been brought up in a cave in that mountain, though some traditions connect his name with Mt. Ida in Asia Minor. Here Saturn met Vesta before Jove (*i.e.* Jupiter) was born. Saturn's reign was called the Golden Age of Italy.

30. **yet, as** yet, up to that time. In modern English we cannot omit 'as' before 'yet' when 'yet' precedes the verb; if we do, the meaning of 'yet' would be changed to 'nevertheless.' In Shakespeare this omission of 'as' before 'yet' is common in negative clauses.

fear of Jove. Saturn was dethroned by his sons, and his realm distributed by lot between Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto. See *Comus* 20, and Keats' *Hyperion.*

31. **pensive,** thoughtful: comp. *Lyc.* 147. It is from Lat. *pendo,* to weigh: so we speak of a person *weighing* his words.

Nun, a woman who devotes herself to celibacy and seclu-

sion; hence the word is well applied to the daughter of pure Vesta and solitary Saturn: comp. l. 103.

31. **devout**; radically the same word as 'devoted'; the former is used in the general sense of 'pious,' applied to those given up or *vowed* to religious exercises; while the latter is used of strong attachment of any kind,—to God, to any sacred purpose, to friends, etc.

32. **steadfast**, constant, resolute: comp. 'staid,' line 16; and 'bested,' line 3. The suffix *-fast* means 'firm,' as in the phrases 'fast bound,' 'fast asleep,' 'fast colour,' and in the words 'fasten' and 'fastness.'

demure, modest. Trench points out that this is the primary meaning of the word, though it now implies that the modesty is assumed. It is from the French *de* (*bons*) *meurs*, *i.e.* of good manners. The Latin word *mores* (manners) was used in the sense of 'character'; hence our word *moral*. For the form of the word, comp. 'debonair,' *L'Alleg.* 24.

33. **All**: this may be taken as an adverb modifying the phrase 'in a robe of darkest grain.' Comp. 'all in white' (*Son.* xxiii.); all = from head to foot.

grain, purple colour. It is interesting to trace the various uses of this word to its primary sense 'a small seed.' It came to be applied to any small seed-like object, then to any minute particle (*e.g. grains* of sand); it was thus used of the small cochineal insects, whose bodies yield a variety of red dyes, and finally to the dyes so obtained. Hence 'grain,' as used here, denotes a dark purple, sometimes called Tyrian purple. But, as these dyes were very durable, 'to dye *in grain*' came to mean 'to dye deeply' or 'to dye in fast colours'; and, more generally still, we speak of a habit or a vice being 'ingrained' in a person's character. Comp. *Com.* 750, *Par. Lost*, v. 285, xi. 242, and Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*—

"So deep *in grain* he dyed his colours."

(The word 'grain,' from its sense of 'particle,' is applied also to the arrangement of particles or the texture of wood or stone, and even of cloth.)

35. **And (in) sable stole of cypress lawn**, in a black scarf of fine linen crape.

'Sable,' here used in the sense of 'black,' this being the colour of the best sable fur. The stole (Lat. *stola*) worn by Roman ladies was a long flounced robe, reaching to the feet, short-sleeved, and girded round the waist. Milton, however, means a hood or veil, which was first passed round the neck and then over the face: such a stole was worn to denote mourning. The word is now used only of a long narrow scarf, fringed at both ends, and worn by ecclesiastics.

'Cypress' (often spelt *cyprus*) by itself denotes 'crape,' a word which is probably from the same root (Lat. *crispus*, curled); when combined with 'lawn,' it denotes crape of the finest kind. The spelling gave rise to the theory that 'cypress' was so called because first made in the island of Cyprus (which has given a name to *copper*), but this is doubtful.

'Lawn' is really a sort of fine linen: a bishop's surplice is made of it. Comp. Pope's line—

"A saint in *crape* is twice a saint in *lawn*."

36. **decent shoulders.** The Latin *decens* meant either 'graceful' or 'becoming.' Milton uses the word in the former sense elsewhere, and may also do so here. If it is used in the latter sense it is proleptic, the stole being drawn over the shoulders so as to be becoming.

37. **wonted state,** usual stately manner. Here 'state' refers to the dignified approach of the goddess: in *Arc.* 81 it has its older and more restricted sense = seat of honour. 'To keep state' was to occupy the seat of honour.

'Wonted' = accustomed. This is apparently the past participle of a verb *to wont* (see *Com.* 332); but the old verb *wonen*, to dwell or to be accustomed, had *woned* or *wont* for its participle. The fact that 'wont' was a participle was forgotten, and a new form was introduced—'wonted' (= won-ed-ed). The two forms have now distinct uses: 'wont' is used as a noun = custom, or as a participial adjective with the verb 'to be' (see line 123); 'wonted' is used only as an adjective, never predicatively.

38. **musing gait,** contemplative manner of walking. 'Gait' is cognate with 'gate' = a way, perhaps the same word: it is a mistake to connect either of these words radically with the verb 'go.'

39. **And** (with) **looks commercing,** etc. Milton may mean not only that the looks of the goddess were turned to heaven, but also that she was communing with heaven: this would give additional significance to l. 40. The use of the word 'commerce' has been restricted in two ways—(1) by being applied only to trade, whereas Shakespeare, Milton, and others use it of any kind of intercourse, and (2) by being used only as a noun, whereas Milton used it as verb and noun. He also accents it here on the second syllable. The Latin *commercium* was of general application: comp. Ovid's *Tristia*, v. 10, "Exercent illi sociæ *commercia* linguæ."

40. **rapt,** enraptured: to be rapt in thought is to be so occupied with one's thoughts as to become oblivious to what is around, as if the mind or soul had been *carried away* (Lat. *raptus*, seized): comp. 'ecstasies,' l. 165 and note, and *Com.* 794. Milton also used the word of the actual snatching away of a person: 'What

accident hath *rapt* him from us,' *Par. Lost*, ii. 40. (The student should note that there is a participle 'rapt' from the English verb 'rap,' to seize quickly; from this root comes 'rape,' while 'rapine,' 'rapid,' 'rapacious,' etc., are from the Latin root.)

40. **soul**, nominative absolute. On the expressiveness of the eye, comp. Tennyson's line—

"Her eyes are homes of silent prayer."

41. **There**, in that position.

held in holy passion still, held motionless through holy emotion. 'Passion' (Lat. *patior*) is here used in its primary sense of 'feeling or emotion': it is used in this sense in the Bible (*Acts*, xiv. 15, *Jas.* v. 17). It was then applied to pain or suffering, as in the phrase 'Passion week.' The word is now used chiefly of anger or eager desire. There are two cognate adjectives, *patient* and *passive*.

Forget thyself to marble, become as insensible as a marble statue to all around. Comp. *On Shakespeare*, 14. The same idea occurs in the phrase 'to be *petrified* with astonishment.'

43. **With a sad leaden**, etc.: with the eyes cast down towards the earth as if in sadness or deep thought. "Leaden-coloured eye-sockets betoken melancholy, or excess of thoughtfulness" (Masson). The poet Gray has the same idea: "With *leaden* eye that loves the ground."

44. **fix**, subjunctive after 'till,' because referring to the future. The subjunctive mood after 'till' and 'when' is now generally superseded by the indicative: comp. lines 44, 122, 173.

as fast, as steadfastly (as they were before fixed on the skies): see note on l. 38.

46. **Spare Fast.** Frugality of life is here personified and represented as lean. Milton, in his writings, frequently associates plain living with high thinking, and in his own habits he was extremely frugal and abstemious. In his sixth *Elegy* he declares that, though the elegiac poets may be inspired by good cheer, the poet who wishes to sing of noble and elevated themes (to 'diet with the gods') must follow the frugal precepts of Pythagoras: 'the poet is sacred; he is the priest of heaven, and his bosom conceives, and his mouth utters, the hidden god.' This is the idea conveyed in lines 47, 48. See *Comus* 764 for the praises of temperance, and also *Son.* xx.

doth diet And hears. There is here a change of grammatical construction due to change of thought: we should say either 'doth diet and (doth) hear' or 'diets and hears.'

47. **Muses**: the goddesses who presided over the different kinds of poetry and the arts and sciences were daughters of Jupiter, and lived on Mount Olympus.

48. **Aye**, ever, always. 'Sing,' 'infinitive after 'hears.'

50. **trim**, well-kept, and pleasing to the eye: comp. *L'Alleg.* 75. In Milton's time the style of gardening was extremely artificial. Shakespeare and Milton both have the word 'trim' in the sense of 'adornment.'

his, is not here used for *its*, Leisure being personified.

51. **first and chiefest**, above all. According to modern usage the form 'chiefest' would be a double superlative, but, as Milton avoids double comparatives and superlatives, it is probable that 'chief' is not to be taken in its strict sense, but merely as denoting a high degree of importance; it would therefore admit of comparison. Shakespeare, on the contrary, often used a double comparative or superlative merely for emphasis.

52. **yon**, yonder, an adverb; in Milton it is generally an adjective: comp. *Arc.* 36. It is now used only as an adjective, and 'yonder' as an adjective or adverb.

soars on golden wing, etc. "A daring use of the great vision, in *Ezekiel*, chap. x., of the sapphire throne, the wheels of which were four cherubs, each wheel or cherub full of eyes all over, while in the midst of them, and underneath the throne, was a burning fire. Milton, whether on any hint from previous Biblical commentators I know not, ventures to *name* one of these cherubs who guide the fiery wheelings of the visionary throne. He is the Cherub Contemplation. It was by the serene faculty named Contemplation that one attained the clearest notion of divine things,—mounted, as it were, into the very blaze of the Eternal" (Masson). In *Com.* 307 Milton makes Contemplation the nurse of Wisdom.

'Cherub' and 'Contemplation' are in apposition to 'him,' l. 52. 'Contemplation' is to be pronounced here as a word of five syllables.

55. **hist along**: imperative of the verb 'to hist' = to bring silently along, or to call to in a whisper. The word is here very expressive; Silence is summoned by the word which is used to command silence. There is no doubt that 'hist,' 'hush,' and 'whist' are imitative sounds all used originally as interjections; they were afterwards used as verbs, their past participles being *hist*, *hushed*, and *whist*. Hence Skeat thinks that 'hist' in the above line is a past participle = hushed, *i.e.* "bring along with thee the mute, hushed Silence." This is an improbable rendering. 'Hist' is now used only as an interjection, and 'whist' only as an interjection and the name of a game at cards.

It may be noted that as Silence is here personified, there is no tautology in describing her as 'mute.'

56. **'Less**, unless. 'Un' in the word 'unless' is not the negative prefix, but the preposition 'on.'

56. **Philomel**, the nightingale (Greek *Philomēla* = lover of melody). According to legend, she was a daughter of Pandion, King of Attica, and was changed at her own prayer into a nightingale to escape the vengeance of her brother-in-law Tereus. See *Son.* i. and notes.

deign a song, be pleased to sing (Lat. *dignor* = to think worthy).

57. **plight**, strain. There are two words 'plight' of diverse origin and use, and editors of Milton differ as to which is used here. (1) 'Plight' = something *plaited* or interwoven, and so applicable to a strain of sounds interwoven, as in the nightingale's song: Milton, in this sense, speaks of the 'plighted clouds,' *Com.* 301. (2) 'Plight,' = something promised, a duty or condition, now chiefly used to signify an unfortunate condition (A.S. *pliht*, danger). The former is probably the meaning here.

58. **Smoothing the rugged brow of Night**, *i.e.* softening the stern aspect of night. See the same idea of the power of music repeated in *Com.* 251—

> "Smoothing the raven down
> Of darkness till it smiled."

'Smoothing' qualifies 'Philomel.'

59. **While Cynthia**, etc.: the nightingale's song being so sweet that the moon in rapture checks herself in her course in order to listen.

Cynthia, a surname of the Greek Artemis, the goddess of the moon, as Cynthius was of her brother Apollo, the god of the sun; both were born on Mount Cynthus in the isle of Delos. The Romans identified their goddess Diana with Artemis, and in this character she rode in a chariot drawn by four stags. Milton, however, here and elsewhere, speaks of dragons being yoked to her chariot: this applies rather to Ceres, the goddess of plenty. Shakespeare refers frequently to the "dragons of the Night."

On 'check,' see note on *L'Allegro*. 96.

60. **the accustomed oak**, the oak where the nightingale was accustomed to sing, and where the poet perhaps had often listened to it. He may refer (as Masson suggests) to some particular oak over which he had himself often watched the moon, thus giving a personal touch to his bold fancy. The use of the definite article 'the' favours this view.

61. **shunn'st the noise of folly**, avoidest the revels of the foolish. 'Noise,' in Elizabethan writers, has often the sense of 'music,' and it is used by Ben Jonson and Shakespeare to denote 'a company of musicians.' The 'noise of folly' might thus mean 'a company of foolish singers or revellers.'

62. **Most musical, most melancholy**! As in l. 57 the poet associated sweetness and sadness, so also in this line, almost as if music and melancholy were causally related. Comp. Shelley, *To a Skylark*—

"Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our *sweetest* songs are those that tell of *saddest* thought."

63. I often woo thee, chauntress, among the woods in order to hear thy even-song. 'Chauntress,' the feminine of 'chaunter,' one who chants or sings. 'To enchant' is to charm by song.

65. **missing thee**, if I miss thee, *i.e.* if I do not hear thy song.

unseen: see note on 'not unseen,' *L'Alleg.* 57. It has been argued from these words that *Il Penseroso* must have been written before *L'Allegro*.

66. **smooth-shaven green**, where the grass has been newly cut. 'Green' as a noun applies to 'a flat stretch of grass-grown land.' For the form of the compound adjective see note on *L'Alleg.* 22, and comp. 'wide-watered,' 'civil-suited,' 'high-embowèd,' etc.

67. **wandering moon.** The epithet 'wandering' is frequently applied to the moon in Latin and Italian poetry: "*vaga* luna," Horace, *Sat.* i. 8; "*errantem* lunam," Virgil, *Æn.* i. 742.

68. **noon**: here used in its general sense = highest position; comp. the general use of the word 'zenith.' Ben Jonson speaks of the "noon of night," and Milton in *Sams. Agon.* applies it to men—"amidst their highth of *noon*." The word is in prose usually restricted to the sense of 'mid-day'; it is derived from the Lat. *nonus*, ninth, and the church services held at the ninth hour of the day (3 P.M.) were called *nones*. When these were changed to midday, the word 'noon' was used to denote that hour, and hence its present use.

Some interpret 'highest noon' as implying that the moon is nearly full.

69. **Like one**: see note on l. 9. 'Like' is an adjective; 'one' is governed by 'to' understood.

72. **Stooping**: Keightley's note on this is: "He alludes here to that curious optical illusion by which, as the clouds pass over the moon, it seems to be she, not they, that is in motion. This is peculiarly observable when the wind is high, and the clouds are driven along with rapidity." 'Stooping' and 'riding' are co-ordinate attributes of 'moon.'

73. **plat of rising ground**, 'level top of some hillock.' 'Plat' is a *plot* or small piece of level ground: *plot* is the A.S. form of the word. Its relation etymologically with *flat* *vlate*, etc., is doubtful, though commonly taken for granted.

74. **curfew sound.** 'Curfew' (Fr. *couvre-feu* = fire-cover), the bell that was rung at eight or nine o'clock in the evening as a signal that all fires and lights were to be extinguished. As this custom was still in force in Milton's time the sound would be familiar to him, though he is not here closely detailing his own experiences. It must be remembered also that 'curfew' or 'curfew bell' was sometimes used in the more general sense of 'a bell that sounded the hours.' 'Sound,' infinitive after 'hear'; 'to' (the so-called sign of the infinitive) being omitted after such verbs as make, see, hear, feel, bid, etc.

75. **some wide-watered shore**, the shore of some wide 'water.' These words do not show whether the poet refers to a lake, a river (*e.g.* the Thames), or even the sea-shore, for the word *water* may be used of any of these, and *shore* may be employed in its primary sense of 'boundary' or 'edge.' It is pointed out by Masson that in every other case in which Milton uses the word 'shore' he refers to the sea or to some vast expanse of water. 'Some' shows that the poet is describing an ideal scene, not an actual one.

76. **Swinging slow**: this would be an apt description of the sound of the distant sea, but it more probably refers to the curfew. Shakespeare has 'sullen bell' (*King Henry IV.* Pt. II. i. 1). Notice the effect of the rhythm and alliteration of this line in bringing out the meaning.

77. **air**, weather, state of the atmosphere.

78. **Some still removèd place**, some quiet and retired spot (comp. l. 81). The Latin participle *remotus* (=moved back) meant either 'retired' or 'distant': Milton here uses 'removed' in the former sense, and Shakespeare has the same usage, employing also the noun 'removedness'=solitude. In modern English, when 'remote' is used without any qualification, it almost always denotes distance, either in time or place.

will fit, will be suited to my mood. In lines 77, 78, we find a future tense both in the principal and conditional clauses. This sequence of tenses is allowable in English, but the tense of the conditional clause may be varied, *e.g.* :

(1) Fut. Indic. "If the air *will not permit*," etc.
(2) Pres. Indic. "If the air *does not permit*," etc.
(3) Pres. Subjunc. "If the air *do not permit*," etc.

The first form is the least common, though many Indian students use it invariably : it is a good rule to avoid it.

79. **through the room**; adverbial phrase modifying 'to counterfeit.'

80. **Teach light**, etc. : the red-hot ashes merely serve to make the darkness visible. It will be observed that the poet has now

shifted the scene from the country to the town, or at least from out-of-doors to indoors.

81. This line qualifies 'place,' line 78.

82. **Save**=except. The meaning is that the room would be perfectly quiet except for the chirping of the cricket on the hearth or the cry of the night-watchman. The cricket is an insect somewhat resembling a grasshopper, which makes a chirping noise.

83. **bellman's drowsy charm.** The watchman who, before the introduction of the modern police system, patrolled the streets at night, calling the hours, looking out for fires, thieves, and other nocturnal evils. He was accustomed to drawl forth scraps of pious poetry to 'charm' away danger. The word 'drowsy' may imply that these guardians of the night were of little use, being often half or wholly asleep.

84. **nightly harm**: comp. note on *Arcades*, 48.

85. **let my lamp.** "Evidently we are now back in the country, in the turret of some solitary mansion, where there are books, and perhaps astronomical instruments. How fine, however, not to give us the inside view of the turret-room first, but to imagine some one far off outside observing the ray of light slanting from its window!" (Masson). The construction is, 'Let (you) my lamp (to) be seen:' 'let' is imperative, with an infinitive complement.

87. **outwatch the Bear.** 'Out' as a prefix here means *beyond* or *over*, as in outweigh, outvote, outwit, outrun, etc.; and 'watch'=wake. "To outwatch the Bear" is therefore to remain awake till daybreak, for the constellation of the Great Bear does not set below the horizon in northern latitudes, and only vanishes on account of the daylight. *Watch* and *wake* are cognate with *wait:* hence Chaucer's allusion in the *Squire's Tale*, where the maker of the wonderful brass horse is said to "have *waited* many a constellation Ere he had done this operation."

88. **With thrice great Hermes**, *i.e.* reading the books attributed to Hermes Trismegistus (*i.e.* 'thrice-great'). He was an ancient Egyptian philosopher named Thot or Theut, whom the Greeks identified with their god Hermes (the Latin Mercury); the new Platonists regarded him as the source of all knowledge, even Pythagoras and Plato having (it was pretended) derived their philosophy from him. A large number of works, really composed in the fourth century A.D., were ascribed to him, the most important being the *Poemander*, a dialogue treating of nature, the creation of the world, the deity, the human soul, etc.

or unsphere The spirit of Plato, "or may bring back the spirit of Plato from heaven," *i.e.* may search out the doctrines of

Plato by a careful study of his writings. 'Unsphere' is a hybrid (English and Greek); the verbal prefix denotes the reversal of an action as in *un*lock, *un*load, etc., and is distinct from the negative prefix in *un*true, *un*couth, etc. 'Unsphered' is obsolete, so is 'insphered' (*Com.* 3-6): we still speak, however, of a person's sphere or rank, but without the literal reference which the word always has in Milton's writings.

89. **to unfold What worlds**: infinitive of purpose = to unfold those worlds which, etc. The allusion is to one of Plato's dialogues, the *Phaedo*, in which he discusses the state of the soul after the death of the body. Comp. *Comus* 463-475.

91. **forsook**, forsaken. 'Forsook,' a form of the past tense, here used as a past participle. It must not be supposed that the word 'forsaken' did not exist. Milton, like Shakespeare (*Othello* iv. 2), deliberately uses a form of the past tense: comp. *Arc.* 4.

92. **Her mansion in this fleshly nook**, her temporary abode in the body. Trench points out that 'mansion' in our early literature is frequently used to denote a 'place of tarrying,' which might be for a longer or a shorter time: this is evidently the sense here: comp. *Comus* 2. The 'fleshly nook' is the body, so called in order to contrast it with the 'immortal mind.' Locke calls the body the 'clay cottage' of the mind, and in the Bible it is sometimes compared to a temple or tabernacle (2 *Cor.* v. 1, 2 *Pet.* i. 13): comp. 'earthy,' *Son.* xiv. 3.

The use of the possessive 'her' in this line may be explained by the fact that the Lat. *mens* (the mind) is feminine: it must be remembered also that *its* was not yet in general use and that Milton is fond of the feminine personification: comp. l. 143.

93. **And of those demons.** This, like 'worlds,' depends grammatically upon 'unfold,' but as 'to unfold of' is an awkward construction we may here supply some verb like 'tell.' This is an instance of zeugma.

In Plato's *Timaeus*, *Phaedo*, *Critias*, etc., we find references to the Greek *daimona* = spirits, who were not necessarily bad; in fact it was a subject of discussion with some of the Platonists whether there were bad, as well as good, spirits. During the Middle Ages the different orders and powers of demons or spirits were very variously stated: one writer (quoted in *Anat. of Mel.*) gives six kinds of sublunary spirits—"fiery, aerial, terrestrial, watery, and subterranean, besides fairies, satyrs, nymphs, etc." Milton here refers to four of these classes, each being conversant with one of the four elements—fire, air, water, earth. This division of the elements or elemental forms of matter dates from the time of the Greek philosopher Empedocles (B.C. 470).

95. **consent**; the demons are in sympathetic relation with certain planets and elements; *e.g.* one writer made "seven kinds

of aethereal spirits or angels, according to the number of the seven planets," and in *Par. Reg.* ii. Milton represents the fallen angels as presiding, under Satan, as powers over earth, air, fire, and water, and causing storms and disasters.

'Consent' is here used in its radical sense (L. *con*, with, and *sentire*, to feel), an exact rendering of the Greek *sym-pathy*. Comp. 1 *Henry VI.* i. 1.

97. **Sometime**, on some occasion: comp. *L'Alleg.* 57. Il Penseroso here passes to the study of the greatest and most solemn tragic writers.

98. **sceptred pall**, kingly robe. Both the pall and the sceptre were insignia of royalty, and in ancient Greek tragedies the kings and queens wore a sleeved tunic (*chiton*) falling to the feet, and over this a shawl-like garment called by the Romans *palla*. Prof. Hales suggests that 'in sceptred pall' may here mean 'with pall and with sceptre,' *i.e.* two things are expressed by one: comp. ll. 75 and 146.

99. **Presenting Thebes**, etc. 'Present' is here used in its technical sense, 'to represent'; we now speak of a theatrical 'representation.' Comp. *Arcades, sub-title.*

Aeschylus has a drama called *Seven against Thebes*; this city is also referred to in the *Antigone* and *Œdipus* of Sophocles, and the *Bacchae* of Euripides. Pelops (from whom the Peloponnesus is said to have derived its name) was the father of Atreus and great-grandfather of Agamemnon; his name was so celebrated that it was constantly used by the poets in connection with his descendants and the cities they inhabited. And the 'tale of Troy divine' (*i.e.* the story of the Trojan war) is dealt with in various plays by Sophocles and Euripides. Troy is here called 'divine' because, during its long siege, the gods took the keenest interest in the contest.

101, 102. These lines certainly refer to Shakespeare's great tragedies, and the words 'though rare' probably express Milton's sense both of Shakespeare's superiority over his contemporaries, and of the comparative barrenness of the English tragic drama until Shakespeare arose. (Comp. the preface to *Sams. Agon.*) We thus see clearly that the language applied to Shakespeare in *L'Allegro*, 133, referred to one aspect of the poet; here we have the other.

buskined stage, the tragic drama. 'Buskin' (Lat. *cothurnus*) was a high-heeled boot worn by Greek tragic actors in order to add to their stature, and so to their dignity: comp. *L'Alleg.* 132. The words 'buskin' and 'sock' came to denote the kinds of drama to which they belonged; and even to express certain styles of composition: thus Quintilian says, "Comedy does not strut in tragic buskins, nor does tragedy step along in

the slipper of comedy." Grammatically, 'what' is nom. to 'hath ennobled,' its suppressed antecedent being obj. of 'presenting.'

103. **sad Virgin**, *i.e.* Melancholy: comp. l. 31.

that thy power, etc.: 'would that thy power,' or 'I would that thy power.' This construction (which has all the force of an interjection) is often used to express a wish that cannot be realized. 'Raise' (l. 104), 'bid' (l. 105), and 'call' (l. 109) are all co-ordinate verbs.

104. **Musæus**, like Orpheus, a semi-mythological personage, represented as one of the earliest Greek poets. Milton here expresses a wish that his sacred hymns could be recovered. For 'bower,' comp. *Son.* viii. 9.

105. For the story of Orpheus, see note on *L'Allegro*, 145.

106. **warbled to the string**, sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument: see note on *Arc.* 87.

107. **Drew iron tears**. This expresses the inflexible nature of Pluto, the god of the lower world. In the same way we speak of an '*iron* will,' '*iron* rule,' etc.

109. **him that**, etc.: Chaucer, who left his *Squire's Tale* unfinished. In this tale (one of the richest of the Canterbury Tales) we read of the Tartar king, Cambus Khán. Chaucer, like Milton, writes the name as one word, but, unlike Milton, and more correctly, he does not accent the penult. The following extracts (from Tyrwhitt's edition of Chaucer) explain the allusions—

> This noble king, this Tartar Cambuscan,
> Had two sonnës by Elfeta his wife,
> Of which the eldest son hight Algarsife,
> That other was ycleped Camballo.
> A daughter had this worthy king also,
> That youngest was, and hightë Canace . . . .
> In at the hallë door all suddenly
> There came a knight upon a steed of brass,
> And in his hand a broad mirrór of glass;
> Upon his thumb he had of gold a ring
> And by his side a naked sword hanging.

The king of 'Araby and Ind' had sent the horse as a present to Cambuscan, and the mirror and ring to Canacè. Milton may have included Chaucer amongst the 'great bards' in whom Il Penseroso delighted, because the thought of the earliest Greek poets suggested Chaucer, "the well of English undefiled," or (as Masson thinks) because the reference to the lost poems of Greece suggested the unfinished poem of Chaucer. Milton was well acquainted with the *Squire's Tale* and with subsequent continuations of it (*e.g.* by Spenser).

112. **who had Canacè to wife**: (of him) who was Canacè's husband. Chaucer does not mention his name (except where he mistakenly calls him Camballo): Spenser makes her the wife of Triamond. 'To wife'; in such phrases 'to' seems to denote the end or purpose.

113. **That**, rel. pronoun, antecedent Canacè.

virtuous, full of power or efficacy. The Lat. *virtus*= manly excellence. In the English Bible 'virtue' is used in the sense of strength or power (comp. *Com.* 165), and we still say 'by virtue of'=by the power of. But the adjective 'virtuous' now denotes only moral excellence.

The ring referred to above, when worn on the thumb or carried in the purse, enabled the wearer to understand the language of birds and the healing properties of all herbs. The glass or mirror enabled its owner to look into the future and into men's hearts.

114. **of the wondrous horse**, *sc.* the story. Readers of the *Arabian Nights Entertainment* will remember the story of the enchanted horse, regarding which Warton says: "The imagination of this story consists in Arabian fiction, engrafted on Gothic chivalry. Nor is this Arabian fiction purely the sport of arbitrary fancy; it is, in a great measure, founded on Arabian learning. The idea of a horse of brass took its rise from the mechanical knowledge of the Arabians, and their experiments in metals."

116. **if aught else**, whatever else. This is a Latinism: many clauses in Latin introduced by *si quid*, *si quando*, etc. are best introduced in English by such words as 'whatever,' 'whenever,' etc.

great bards beside, other great bards. The poets referred to are such as Ariosto, Tasso, and Spenser, in whose romances Milton was well read. In one of his prose works he says: "I may tell you whither my younger feet wandered. I betook me among those lofty fables and romances which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of knighthood." 'Beside' as an adverb is now almost displaced by the later form 'besides.'

117. **sage and solemn tunes**, wise and dignified verse, as that of the Spenserian stanza. For 'solemn' see *Arc.* 7, note.

118. **turneys**. 'Turney,' a form of 'tourney' (Fr. *tournay*), a mock-fight, so called from the swift *turning* of the horses in the combat. 'Tournament' is merely a Latinised form of the word; comp. *L'Alleg.* 123.

trophies hung. These were arms or banners taken from a defeated enemy and *hung* up as memorials. The word is from the Greek *tropé*, a turning, *i.e.* causing the enemy to *turn*.

119. **enchantments**, use of magic arts. Radically, 'enchant-

ment' = magic verses sung when it was desired to place a person under some spell (Lat. *incantare*, to repeat a chant): comp. lines 63, 83, and *Lyc.* 59.

120. **Where more is meant**, etc.: in which poetry there is a deeper meaning than is apparent on the surface. The poets referred to in l. 116 had generally a high moral purpose in their writings; *e.g.* Spenser's *Faerie Queene* is a noble spiritual allegory, the particular references in it being "secondary senses lying only on the surface of the main design." The same is true of Tasso's *Enchanted Forest.*

121. **Thus, Night**, etc.: 'thus let me be often seen by thee, O Night, in thy pale course.'

pale career. Contrast 'pale' with the epithets applied by poets to the dawn, *e.g.* 'ruddy,' 'rosy-fingered,' etc.

122. **civil-suited Morn.** In *L'Allegro* the Sun appears in royal robes and surrounded by his liveried servants; in *Il Penseroso* Morning comes clad in the garb of a simple citizen and attended by wind and rain.

'Civil,' from Lat. *civis*, a citizen, is here used in its primary sense. It is opposed to military or ecclesiastical, as in 'civil engineer,' 'civil service.' It has also the meaning of 'polite' or 'well-mannered,' as contrasted with boorish or rustic manners; but it has lost (as Trench points out) all its deeper significance: "a *civil* man once was one who fulfilled all the duties and obligations flowing from his position as a *civis.*"

123. **tricked and frounced**: literally, 'adorned with fine clothes and having the hair frizzled or curled.' In *Lycidas*, 170, the sun is said to *trick* his beams: the verb is cognate with the noun 'trick,' something neatly contrived.

'Frounced': the word originally meant 'to wrinkle the brow,' and there is an old French phrase, *froncer le front*, with this meaning. The present form of the word is 'flounce.'

as, in the manner in which. For 'wont' see note on line 37.

124. **Attic boy**; the Athenian youth Cephalus, beloved by Eos (Aurora), the goddess of the dawn. It was while he was stag-hunting on Mount Hymettus in Attica that she fell in love with him.

125. **kerchieft**, having the head covered. 'Kerchief' is exactly similar in form to 'cur-few' (*q.v.* line 74); it is from Fr. *couvre-chef*, head-cover. The original meaning being overlooked we have now such compounds as 'hand-kerchief,' 'neckerchief,' 'pocket-handkerchief.'

comely, becoming: comp. *Merry Wives of Windsor*, iii. 3. 26.

126. **piping**, whistling: 'loud,' used adverbially.

127. **ushered**, introduced (Lat. *ostium*, an entrance). The word here qualifies 'Morn.' 'Still' is an adjective qualifying 'shower': notice Milton's fondness for this word.

128. **hath blown his fill**, has exhausted itself, has ceased. As there is no personification here, *his* = *its*: in none of the poems in this volume does the word *its* occur. In fact, it is almost entirely ignored by Milton, being used only three times in the whole of his poetry; this arose from the fact that *its* was then a new word, and also because he did not seem to feel the need for it, its place being taken in his involved syntax by the relative pronoun and other connectives, or by *his*, *her*, *thereof*, etc. The word *its* does not occur in the language till the end of the sixteenth century, the possessive case of the neuter pronoun *it* and of the masculine *he* being *his*. This gave rise to confusion when the old gender system decayed, and the form *its* gradually came into use until, by the end of the seventeenth century, it was generally adopted.

Grammatically 'his fill' denotes the extent to which 'the gust hath blown,' and is therefore an adverbial adjunct. Some, however, would explain it as a cognate objective.

129. **Ending** ... **With minute-drops**; the end of the shower being marked by drops falling at intervals. 'Minute' (accent on first syllable) is applied as an adjective to something occurring at short intervals, once a minute or so, *e.g.* 'minute-guns,' 'minute-bells,' etc. Minúte (accent on second syllable) = very small.

130. **eaves**, projecting edge of the roof. This word is singular, though often regarded as plural: the final 's' is part of the root, and the plural properly should be *eaveses* (which is not used). An 'eaves-dropper' is strictly one who stands under the drops that fall from the eaves, hence a 'secret listener.'

132. **flaring**, glittering or flashing; generally applied to a light whose brightness is offensive to the eye, and is so used here to suit the mood of Il Penseroso. 'Flare' is cognate with 'flash.'

me, Goddess, etc.; *i.e.* Melancholy, bring me, etc.

133. **twilight groves and shadows brown**, groves with such half-light as there is in the twilight, when the shadows cast on the ground are not deep black, but (as Milton says) 'brown.' Comp. *Par. Lost*, iv. 254—

> "Where the unpierced shade
> *Imbrowned* the noon-tide bowers."

Also *Par. Lost*, ix. 1086—

> "Where highest woods, impenetrable
> To star or sunlight, spread their umbrage broad,
> And *brown* as evening!"

The Italians express the approach of evening by a word meaning 'to embrown.'

134. **Sylvan**: Sylvanus, the god of fields and forests. 'Sylvan' is a misspelling of 'silvan' (Lat. *silva*, a wood); the spelling in *y* was made in order to assimilate *silva* to the Greek *hylé*, a wood, but the radical connection is doubtful.

135. **monumental oak.** The obvious meaning of 'monumental' is, as Masson suggests, 'memorial,' 'old,' 'telling of bygone years. An aged oak is a memorial of the flight of time; it suggests also massiveness.

136. **rude axe with heavèd stroke.** This is an example of chiasmus, the epithet 'rude' belonging to 'stroke,' and 'heavèd' to 'axe.' 'Heaved'=uplifted.

137. **nymphs**, *i.e.* wood nymphs: comp. line 154.

daunt, to frighten (from Lat. *domitare*, to subdue; hence 'indomitable'=not able to be daunted).

138. **hallowed haunt**, abode sacred to them.

139. **covert**, sheltered spot, thicket: a 'covert' is strictly a '*covered* place.'

140. **no profaner eye**, no unsympathetic eye. 'Profaner'= somewhat profane; on this Latin use of the comparative see l. 15, note. 'Profane' (Lat. *pro*, before, and *fanum*, a temple) was applied to those who, not being initiated into the sacred rites, were compelled to wait outside the temple during the sacrifices; hence it came to mean (1) 'not sacred,' as in the phrase '*profane* history,' and (2) 'impure,' as in *profane* language.' Il Penseroso applies it to those not in sympathy with his mood.

141. **day's garish eye.** Milton frequently speaks of the 'eye of day' (comp. *Son.* i. 5, *Com.* 978, *Lyc.* 26). 'Garish'=staring or glaring, generally used, as here, to express dislike, though some Elizabethan writers use it in a good sense. There is an old English verb *gare*=to stare, formed, by the change of *s* to *r*, from A.S. *gasen*.

142. **honeyed thigh.** If this means that the bee collects honey on its thigh, it is a mistake; it is the pollen or flower-dust that is thus collected, while the honey is sucked into the animal's body. Virgil, however, who probably knew more about bees than Milton did, uses a similar expression (*Ecl.* i. 56).

143. **her**: see notes on lines 92 and 128.

sing, hum: the verb *sing* is very variously used by Elizabethan writers.

145. **consort**, other sounds of nature that accompany the humming of the bee, etc. 'Consort' is here used concretely, and in its original sense (Lat. *consors*, a partner). Old writers fre-

quently confused it with 'concert' = harmony, but the words are quite distinct, and in modern English they are never confused.

146. **Entice**: the nominatives of this verb are 'bee' and 'waters.' Its meaning is 'to induce to come'; by a common metaphor sleep is represented as shy, as easily frighted, as requiring to be wooed or enticed. Comp. 2nd *Henry IV.* iii. 1.

dewy-feathered Sleep. We have here one of those compound epithets (so frequent in Milton) which have been described as poems in miniature. In most of these the first word qualifies the second, so that 'dewy-feathered sleep' may mean 'Sleep with dewy feathers.' The god of Sleep (l. 10) was represented as winged, and he may be supposed to shake dew from his wings as the Archangel in *Par. Lost* v. 286 diffused fragrance by shaking his plumes.

It is common, however, for poets to speak of the dew of sleep (comp. *Richard III.* iv. 1, *Julius Caesar* ii. 1) without any reference to its being winged: we might therefore take 'dewy-feathered' to have the force of two co-ordinate adjectives 'dewy' and 'feathered': see note on l. 98.

147-150. This passage is a difficult one: Prof. Masson reads it thus, 'Let some strange mysterious dream wave (*i.e.* move to and fro) at his (*i.e.* Sleep's) wings in airy stream,' etc. It is customary for poets to speak of Dreams as the messengers of Sleep (see l. 10); here a dream is borne on the wings of Sleep and hovers over the poet in an airy stream of vivid images portrayed upon his mental eye.

Some, however, take 'his wings' to denote the Dream's wings, in which case *at* is difficult of explanation: one editor therefore suggests that it be struck out, and that 'wave' be regarded as a transitive verb! The previous view is preferable. (It is possible also to hold that the Dream's wings are displayed (*i.e.* reflected) in the airy stream, and that he waves *at* this reflection, as we say a dog barks *at* its shadow reflected in a pool of water.)

149. **lively** has its radical sense of 'life-like'; so we speak of a 'life-like portrait,' a *vivid* picture (Lat. *vivus*, living).

151. **breathe**: a verb in the imperative addressed to the goddess Melancholy, as 'bring,' 'hide,' and 'let' in the preceding lines. (Some would take it as an infinitive depending on 'let.')

153. **to mortals good**, good to mortals. 'Good' = propitious; comp. *Lyc.* 184. In this line 'Spirit' is to be pronounced as a monosyllable.

154. **Genius**, guardian spirit: see *Arcades* and *Comus* regarding the duties of such spirits.

155. **due feet**, my feet that are *due* at the places of worship

and learning. *Due*, *duty*, and *debt* are all from the Lat. *debitus*, owed; the last directly, the others through French.

156. **To walk** is here a transitive verb=to frequent, to traverse.

studious cloister's pale; the precincts or enclosure of some building devoted to learning and (as the next line shows) to religious services. 'Cloister' is a covered arcade forming part of a church or college: Milton may have been thinking of his life at Cambridge, though the details of the description do not apply to any particular building. The radical sense of the word is a *closed-in* place (Lat. *clausus*, shut).

'Pale' is a noun=enclosure; etymologically, a place shut in by pales or wooden stakes; hence our words *paling*, *impale*, and *palisade*. We still speak of the *pale* of the Church, the *English pale* in Ireland, the *pale* of a subject, etc.

157. **love the high-embowèd roof.** The poet here passes from the cloister to the inside of some church: (it may be the college-chapel that is in Milton's thoughts, or even St. Paul's Cathedral or Westminster Abbey). 'High-embowèd,' *i.e.* arched or vaulted, as in the Gothic style of architecture, which Milton, with all his Puritanism, never ceased to love. "Observe that only at this point of the poem is Penseroso in contact with his fellow-creatures. Throughout the rest he is solitary" (*Masson*).

The grammatical construction is peculiar: we cannot say, 'let my due feet never fail to love'; it is better therefore to read, 'let (me) love,' etc., *me* being implied in '*my* feet.' See note on *L'Alleg.* 122.

158. **antique**: see *L'Alleg.* 128, note.

massy proof: proof against the great weight of the stone roof, because they are massive. Shakespeare and Milton use 'proof' in the sense of 'strong,' and 'massy' is an older form of the adjective than 'massive,' occurring in Spenser and Shakespeare as well as here. Similar examples are 'adamantean proof' applied to a coat of mail, not because it is proof against adamant, but because, being made of adamant, it is proof against assailants (*Sams. Agon.* 134); also virtue-proof=strong against temptation, because virtuous (*Par. Lost*, v. 384). The introduction of a hyphen ('massy-proof'), which does not occur in the first and second editions, has caused some editors to interpret the words as 'proof against the mass they bear': in those cases, however, in which that against which the object is proof is mentioned, the first part of the compound is a noun, *e.g.* star-proof, shame-proof, sunbeam-proof (*Arc.* 88). The first interpretation is therefore more probably correct.

159. **storied windows**, windows of stained glass with stories from Scripture history represented on them. 'Story' is an

abbreviated form of 'history,' the latter being directly from Lat. *historia*, the other through the French. It has no connection with 'story' (= part of a house), which means something built (comp. *store*).

159. **dight**: see *L'Alleg.* 62, note.

160. **religious light**, such a light as is suited to a place of worship, and tending to prevent one's thoughts from being distracted. 'Religious,' like 'studious' (line 156), is a transferred epithet.

161. **pealing organ**, loud-sounding organ. Milton has several references to the organ (comp. *Par. Lost*, i. 708, xi. 560)—an instrument upon which he could himself play. 'Blow,' used in a semi-passive sense, and applied to wind-instruments (such as the organ). Line 163 depends on 'blow,' giving the circumstances of the action.

162. **quire**, band of singers or choristers. 'Quire' is another spelling of 'choir' (Lat. *chorus*, a band of singers, Greek *choros*, a band of singers and dancers). A 'choir' is now a body of trained singers who lead the voices of a congregation: the name is also applied to the part of the church in which they are seated. The 'quire below' here means 'the choir below the organ-gallery.' 'Quire,' denoting a collection of sheets of paper, is an entirely different word, being cognate with the French *cahier*, a small book (or, more probably, with the Lat. *quatuor*, four). See note, *Epitaph on M. of W.* 17.

163. **anthems**, sacred music. 'Anthem' is a contraction of the A.S. *antefn*, which is corrupted from the Lat. *antiphona* (Greek *anti*, in return, and *phone*, the voice); it is therefore radically the same as the English word *antiphon*, which denotes music sung by choristers alternately, one half of the choir responding to the other.

clear, may mean 'clearly sung,' or (as in *Lyc.* 70) 'pure' or 'noble.'

164. **As**, relative pronoun, the antecedent 'such' being omitted, as is usual in Chaucer and other old writers.

165, 166. **Dissolve me into ecstasies.** The meaning of these beautiful lines cannot be adequately expressed in prose. The poet desires to hear music that will so melt his soul, so carry him out of himself, that he may almost learn the secrets of divine things. With 'dissolve' comp. 'melting voice' (*L'Alleg.* 142), and with 'ecstasies' comp. 'rapt soul' (line 40, note).

'Ecstasy' is the Greek *ekstasis*, standing or being taken out of one's self, as in a trance. It came afterwards to denote madness, as we say of madmen that they are 'beside themselves'; but its present meaning is enthusiasm or very strong feeling.

168. **peaceful hermitage.** This is a fitting conclusion to the life of Il Penseroso, thus alluded to by Scott (*Marmion*, ii.)—

> "Here have I thought 'twere sweet to dwell,
> And rear again the chaplain's cell,
> Like that same *peaceful hermitage*,
> Where Milton long'd to spend his age."

In old romances there is constant mention of hermits, men who had retired from society and were supposed to devote their lives to philosophic thought or religious contemplation. Burton, in *Anat. of Mel.*, says: "Voluntary solitariness is that which is familiar with melancholy." 'Hermitage': in this word the suffix *-age* denotes place, as in 'parsonage'; 'her-mit,' formerly written 'eremite,' is derived, through French and Latin, from Greek *erémos*, solitary, desert.

In line 167 we have an example of the jussive subjunctive, *i.e.* the subjunctive expressing a wish or desire, 'And may ... find,' etc.: this corresponds to a Latin subjunctive introduced by *quod* or *quod utinam*.

169. **hairy gown**, garment of coarse shaggy cloth. In the English Bible we read of raiment of camel's hair worn by Elijah and John the Baptist. 'Gown' and 'cell' are objects of the verb 'find.'

170. **spell**, read slowly and thoughtfully. We talk of 'spelling out' the meaning of a difficult passage, as a child names the letters of a word, giving each its proper power. In the same way the poet would learn the nature and powers of the stars and herbs (comp. *Son.* xvii. 6): A.S. *spel*, a story, as in *gospel*. Milton refers to this knowledge of the virtues of herbs in *Com.* 620-640, and *Epit. Damon.* 150-154.

171. **Of**, concerning. In this line 'shew' rhymes with 'dew': this points to the fact that, though the pronunciation *show* was familiar, it was not universal; the word is to be pronounced here like *shoe*: comp. *Son.* ii., where 'sheweth' rhymes with 'youth.'

173. There may be a reference here to the old astrologers who claimed the power of predicting events from the study of the stars, but such a power was not the ambition of Milton: he rather means that wise experience of the aged, which enables them, through their knowledge of the past, to judge the probable results of different lines of action.

do attain: subjunctive after 'till': comp. l. 44.

174. **strain**, utterance: we speak of a cheerful or a sad *strain* of speech or music, probably with a metaphorical allusion to the notes of a stringed instrument: 'strain' is literally something *stretched*.

175. **These pleasures**, etc. : comp. note on *L'Alleg.* 151. It will be noticed that the *conditional* nature of Milton's acceptance of Melancholy is not so distinctly expressed as that of Mirth.

ARCADES.

The sub-title of this piece fully explains the occasion of its production. *Arcades*, or "The Arcadians," was a masque of which only the words contributed by Milton have come down to us. It was probably written in 1633, the year before the production of *Comus*, which was composed for another member of the same family.

The lady before whom *Arcades* was 'presented,' *i.e.* represented, was Alice Spencer, Countess-Dowager of Derby, then over seventy years of age. She is the 'rural queen' of the entertainment. She had been married, when young, to Lord Strange, afterwards fifth Earl of Derby. It was to her that the poet Spenser dedicated his *Tears of the Muses* in 1591, and after her husband's death in 1594 he referred to her as Amaryllis in *Colin Clout's come Home again* (1595). She was now Countess-Dowager of Derby, a title she retained until her death. In 1600 she married Sir Thomas Egerton, who was afterwards Lord Chancellor and Viscount Brackley. Next year she and her husband purchased the estate of Harefield in Middlesex, and here they mainly resided. Viscount Brackley died in 1616-17, and his widow survived him for twenty years. She was often visited by her grandchildren, and on some occasion when they wished to entertain her with a masque—then a fashionable form of entertainment—they applied to Henry Lawes, one of the King's private musicians, to manage it for them. He applied to his friend Milton for the words, and these we now have in the form of three short songs and eighty-three lines of blank verse. This was Milton's first attempt at masque-writing.

1. **Look, nymphs and shepherds.** The scene opens with a group of young men and women moving towards the seat occupied by the Countess-Dowager of Derby. As they advance one of the company addresses his companions in song.

3. **from hence**: see note, *L'Alleg.* 1. 'Hence' means 'from this place,' so that in the phrase 'from hence' the force of the preposition is twice introduced. Such idioms arise from forgetfulness of the origin of words.

descry, make out, discover by the eye. 'Descry' is radically the same as 'describe': both are from Lat. *describere*, to write fully, to trace out; the one directly, the other through French. Comp. such pairs of words as *secure* and *sure*; *fact* and *feat*;

pauper and *poor; tradition* and *treason; potent* and *puissant* (l. 60).

4. **Too divine to be mistook.** Comp. Jonson's *Alchemist*, iv. 1—

> "A certain touch or air,
> That sparkles a *divinity*, beyond
> An earthly beauty."

'Mistook': a form of the past tense used as a past participle: comp. l. 47, and see note, *On Shakespeare*, 12.

5. **This, this is she.** Comp. the Fairies' song in *The Satyr*, in reference to the queen of James I.—

> "This is she, this is she
> In whose world of grace
> Every season, person, place,
> That receive her happy be."

The whole of the first song in *Arcades* shows that Milton must have read some of Jonson's masques with care.

6. **vows**, desires: comp. *Lyc.* 159. The Latin *votum* means (1) a solemn promise, (2) a wish or desire. See note, *Son.* ix. 8.

bend, are directed.

7. **solemn**, devout. The word is from Lat. *sollus*, complete; and *annus*, a year; hence its primary sense is 'recurring at the end of a completed year.' Hence it came to mean 'usual,' and (as religious festivals recur at stated periods) 'religious'; finally, it was applied to anything that was not to be lightly or hastily undertaken, *i.e.* serious or grave.

8. **Fame**: object of the verb 'may accuse.'

to raise: an infinitive of purpose. See *Lyc.* 70, where Fame is used with the verb *raise*, as here.

9. **erst**, formerly, at first. This is the superlative of Old English *er* (ere): see note, *L'Alleg.* 107.

lavish and profuse. These words have radically the same sense: 'lavish' is from an obsolete verb 'lave,' to pour out; and 'profuse' is from Lat. *profundere*, to pour out.

12. **Less than half.** Comp. the words of the Queen of Sheba regarding Solomon: "Behold the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me," 2 *Chron.* ix. 5.

13. **Envy bid conceal the rest**, *i.e.* Envy commanded the rest to be concealed. Comp. Thomson's *Seasons*—

> "Base envy withers at another's joy,
> And hates that excellence it cannot reach."

'Bid' is the past tense, a form which has arisen out of the past participle 'bidden': the past in ordinary use is 'bade.' This is one of those verbs after which the simple infinitive (without *to*) is

used: comp. *Son.* viii. 10, xiv. 13. Such omission of *to* now occurs with so few verbs that *to* is often called the sign of the infinitive; but in early English the only sign of the infinitive was the termination *en* (*e.g. speken*, to speak; he can *speken*). The infinitive, being used as a noun, had a dative form called the gerund which was preceded by *to*; and confusion between this gerundial infinitive and the simple infinitive led to the general use of *to*.

14. **radiant,** sending forth rays or beams of light. *Radius* and *ray* are radically the same word.

state: comp. l. 81. "In the phraseology of this stanza there is perhaps a reference to the actual surroundings of the Countess in the masque—devices of bright light, silver rays seeming to shoot from her throne" (Masson). If so, 'state' may here mean the canopy over the throne, or its adornments. Comp. Jonson's *Hymenaei*, where Juno is represented as seated on a throne—

> "And see where Juno . . .
> Displays her glittering *state and chair*,
> As she enlightened all the air!"

20. **Might she,** etc, she might well be.

the wise Latona. Latona was the wife of Jupiter before Juno, and mother of Apollo and Diana (see *Son.* xii.). She was generally worshipped as a goddess in conjunction with her children, and this may explain why Milton introduces her name here.

21. **towered Cybelé.** Cybele is here referred to as the mother of the gods in order to compliment the Countess on her distinguished family. In works of art she is usually represented as seated on a throne, adorned with a mural crown to signify that she first taught men the art of fortifying cities: hence the epithet 'towered.' In *Elegy* v. Milton speaks of her as the goddess of fertility and crowned with a tower of pines. Ovid calls her *turrita mater*, and Spenser writes—

> "Old Cybele, arrayed with pompous pride,
> Wearing a *diadem embattled* wide
> With hundred *turrets*, like a turban." *F.Q.* iv.

She was the wife of Saturn and mother of Jupiter, Juno, Neptune, Pluto, Vesta and Ceres.

23. **Juno dares ... odds,** *i.e.* Juno, in a contest of beauty, would not venture to compete with her on equal terms. This implies another compliment to the Countess.

24. **Who had thought**: who *would have* thought (that) etc. Comp.—

"O had his powerful destiny ordained
Me some inferior angel, I *had stood*
Then happy:" (*i.e.* I would have stood).

24. **clime**, region: see note, *Son.* viii. 8.

25. **so unparalleled.** Strictly, *unparalleled* cannot have its meaning modified by an adverb of degree: it is here used, however, merely to denote a high degree of excellence or beauty. Comp. *chiefest*, *Il Pens.* 51, note.

The student should note the art with which the arrangement of rhymes is varied in the different stanzas of this song. Certain of the rhymes are imperfect, and it is to be remembered that Milton in his poetry used imperfect rhymes freely: see lines 2, 3, 9, 10, 30, 38, 42, 62, 68. Allowance must, however, be made for doubtful pronunciation.

26. The **Genius of the Wood** now speaks. The introduction of a genius or guardian spirit is a common device in Jonson's masques: this form of composition depends more largely upon supernatural agency than the ordinary drama. When *Arcades* was first performed Henry Lawes probably acted the part of the Genius (see *Son.* xiii.): he first addresses the gentlemen, then the ladies of the masque (l. 32).

gentle, well-born, noble. This is the original sense of the word: in Scott we find the word 'gentle' used to denote persons of rank, a usage still common in Scotland. The genius here explains why he called the performers 'gentle': "I call you gentle because, in spite of your disguise, I see," etc. Comp. *Par. Lost*, ii. 11.

27. **I see bright honour**, etc. Comp.

"Yet well I know you come of royal race,
I see such *sparks of honour in your face.*"
Hist. of King Leir.

The object of 'see' is complex, consisting of a substantive ('honour') and an infinitive ('sparkle').

28. **Arcady**, Arcadia. For the form of the word comp. Araby for Arabia, Italy for Italia, family for familia, etc., in all of which *y* represents Lat. *ia*.

Arcadia was a country in Peloponnesus (peninsular Greece) of which the inhabitants were chiefly engaged in pastoral pursuits; they were simple in their manners, and retained their primitive habits long after the rest of Greece. Hence writers of pastoral poetry often laid the scene of their poems in Arcadia, and the characters in pastoral dramas were represented as Arcadians (Lat. *Arcades*), and described as 'swains' or 'shepherds.' Sir Philip Sidney wrote a pastoral romance called *Arcadia* (1590). The phrase 'Arcadian simplicity' has passed into a proverb.

29. **flood**; often used in poetry for 'river.'

sung, celebrated in poetry, *e.g.* by Virgil. See also Shelley's *Arethusa* for a subsequent reference to this 'flood.'

30. **Alpheus**, pronounced Al-phé-us. A river-god who pursued the nymph Arethusa; she was changed by Diana into the fountain of Arethusa in the island of Ortygia at Syracuse, but the god continued to pursue her under the sea, and attempted to mingle his stream with the Ortygian fountain. This story arises from the fact that the Alpheus, a river which rises in Arcadia, flows for some distance underground before falling into the Ionian Sea. The Arcadians believed that an object thrown into the Alpheus would reappear in the fountain of Arethusa. See *Lyc.* 85, 132.

sluice, passage, flood-gate. A 'sluice' is literally something that *excludes* (Lat. *excludere*, to shut off).

31. **Stole.** From this verb comes 'stealth': see *Com.* 503.

Arethuse: see note, l. 30 above.

32. **breathing roses**: here applied to the lady performers, so that 'breathing' may mean simply 'animated.' But Milton so often uses the word 'breathe' in cases where fragrance or sweetness is signified, that it may here be interpreted in this sense.

33. **silver-buskined.** Diana and her wood-nymphs wore light boots reaching to the calf of the leg: such boots were therefore different from the buskins worn by tragic actors; see *Il Pens.* 102.

as great and good, *i.e.* as the swains addressed previously, l. 26.

34. **intent**, purpose, that towards which the mind is *stretched* (Lat. *intendere*, to stretch out). See note, *Son.* xii a. 9. For the use of 'free' comp. note, *L'Alleg.* 11.

35. **Was ... meant.** The subject of this verb consists of two nouns, *quest* and *intent*, which together express one idea: the verb is therefore singular. Comp. *Lyc.* 7.

all, entirely: an adverb of degree modifying 'meant.'

36. **yon**, that in the distance. In the oldest English *yond* was a preposition=*beyond*, or an adverb=*yonder*. In *Il Pens.* 52 *yon* is an adverb, here it is an adjective. Shakespeare uses *yond* as an adverb and an adjective.

shrine, place sacred to a divinity.

37. **low reverence**, humble reverence.

38. **comply**, aid. It is radically the same as *complete*: 'to comply' is 'to complete' or fulfil. It has no connection with *ply* or *pliant*, as is often supposed.

39. **glad solemnity.** This looks like a verbal contradiction,

but see note on l. 7 : a solemnity is merely a serious or important duty or function. Thus we speak of *solemnising* a marriage.

40. **lead ye**, *i.e.* (I will) lead you. In this line *ye* occurs twice, once as nominative, once as object. In line 101 it is used as a dative (= to you). "This confusion between *ye* and *you* did not exist in old English : *ye* was always used as a nominative, and *you* as a dative or accusative. In the English Bible the distinction is very carefully observed, but in the dramatists of the Elizabethan period there is a very loose use of the two forms" (Morris) : it is the same in Milton. It is to be noticed that *ye* can be pronounced more rapidly than *you*, and is therefore generally used when an unaccented syllable is wanted (as in the above passage) : see l. 81.

41. This line is the grammatical object of the verb 'may behold.'

shallow-searching : comp. l. 12 and *Lyc.* 70. Nothing distinguishes Milton from other writers so much as the force of his epithets ; the liberty with which he forms compounds, whether hybrid or not, is also remarkable. See *Il Pens.* 66, note.

42. **Which** ; the antecedent is expressed by l. 41.

full oft : 'full,' an adverb of degree, modifying 'oft.' 'Alone' is an adjective qualifying 'I.'

43. **sat** : the past tense of *sit* takes either of the forms *sat* and *sate ;* the former is more common.

44. **by lot from Jove**, *i.e.* by Jupiter's allotment.

the Power, *i.e.* the guardian spirit, *genius loci.* Each spot, according to Roman mythology, had a spirit of its own, and Varro says that in Latium there were as many gods as trees.

45. **oaken bower** : see note, *Lyc.* 33, on *oaten.*

46. **curl the grove** : applied to the foliage of the trees, as in the following passage from Sylvester's *Du Bartas*—

> "When through their green boughs whistling winds do whirl,
> With *wanton* puffs, their *waving locks to curl.*"

The expression is a common one in the poetry of the time (see Todd).

47. **With ringlets**, etc. Observe the alliteration of this line : five words in it contain the *w* sound. 'Wove' = woven ; 'intertwined with quaint ringlets and wanton windings.' There are two forms of the participle, *wove* and *woven ;* comp. *trod* and *trodden* (*L'Alleg.* 131).

quaint, neat, exact. In modern English it means 'odd' or old-fashioned. The word is from Lat. *cognitus*, 'known' or remarkable ; and Chaucer uses it in the sense of 'famous.' In

French it became *coint*, which was treated as if from Lat. *comptus*, neat, ingenious. This explains how the word obtained the meaning Milton gives it. Its present meaning is due to the fact that what is in one age designed with too great attention to art is liable, in a later age, to seem whimsical and odd. See note on *uncouth*, *L'Alleg.* 5.

48. **nightly**, nocturnal, pertaining to night: comp. *Il Pens.* 83. *Nightly* is here an adjective, though its force is that of an adverb = at night: comp. Wordsworth—

"The *nightly* hunter lifting up his eyes"

= The hunter lifting up his eyes *at night*. The usual sense of the word is 'from night to night.' The two uses are due to the fact that *ly* is both an adjectival and an adverbial suffix.

49. **noisome**, injurious. The word is *noi-some*, which is a contraction of *annoy-some*: 'some' is the adjectival suffix. The word has therefore no connection with *noise* or *noxious*.

blasting vapours chill: comp. *Com.* 269, 845, where the Genius performs similar duties. Burton, in *Anat. of Mel.*, speaks of spirits that "hurt and infect men and beasts, vines, corn, cattle, plants," etc.

50. **brush off the evil dew**: comp. *Tempest*, i. 4—

"As *wicked dew* as e'er my mother *brushed*,
With raven's feather, from unwholesome fen."

51. Another alliterative line, showing the same arrangement of adjectives as line 49: see note, *L'Alleg.* 40.

thwarting thunder. 'Thunder' is here used for 'lightning,' Lat. *fulmen*; this explains the epithets 'blue' and 'thwarting' (shooting obliquely through the sky). *Thwart* was originally an adverb; then it was used as an adjective, and finally as a verb (to cross), as in the phrase "As a shooting star in autumn *thwarts* the night" (*Par. Lost*, iv. 557). It is now used also as a noun to denote the seats for rowers placed *athwart* a boat.

52. **cross**, adverse, unfavourable: see *L'Alleg.* 122, note.

dire-looking planet strikes. 'Dire-looking' = of evil aspect; comp. *Lyc.* 138. The planet referred to is Saturn, which in astrology and chiromancy was an unlucky star. For the use of 'strike' comp. *Hamlet*—

"The nights are wholesome; then no planets *strike*,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to harm."

53. **worm ... venom**, the canker-worm. 'Canker' is radically the same as *cancer*, an eating or spreading sore: comp. 'taint-worm,' *Lyc.* 46.

54. **fetch my round**, go my round. The verb has this sense as it is cognate with *foot*: compare "From thence fetching a com-

pass (*i.e.* making a detour) we came to Rhegium," *Acts*, xxviii. 13.

56. **early**: an adverb modifying 'haste,' l. 58.

ere, see note, *L'Alleg.* 107.

odorous breath of morn, fragrant morning breezes. Compare Gray's *Elegy*: "the breezy call of *incense-breathing* morn."

57. **tasselled horn**, *i.e.* huntsman's horn which had tassels hung to it: comp. *L'Alleg.* 53-56.

58. **high thicket**, *i.e.* thicket on the hill-side.

all about: *all* modifies *about*, which again modifies *haste*.

59. **ranks**, rows of trees and plants.

60. **puissant**, potent, powerful (in preventing the effects of the 'evil dew,' etc.). See note on 'descry,' line 3, for explanation of the relation between *potent* and *puissant*. Comp. *The Alchemist*, iv. 1—

"I will be *puissant*, and mighty in my talk to her."

murmurs made to bless, in opposition to the incantations or spells of evil spirits which were either sung or *murmured* over the doomed object: comp. *Comus* 525:

"By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
With many murmurs *mixed*."

61. **But else**, *i.e.* when not thus employed.

deep of night: comp. the phrase 'dead of night.'

62. **mortal sense**, *i.e.* the senses of human beings. The meaning is, 'When all human beings are asleep, I listen,' etc. See *Lyc.* 78, note.

63. **celestial Sirens' harmony**, etc. In these lines Milton refers (1) to the Pythagorean doctrine of the music of the spheres; (2) to that system of astronomy developed by Eudoxus, Plato, Aristotle, Hipparchus, Ptolemy, and others, which is usually called the Ptolemaic system; and (3) to Plato's theory of the relation of the Fates or "daughters of Necessity" to that system.

(1) Pythagoras (B.C. 580), having remarked that the pitch of notes depends on the rate of vibration, and also that the planets move with different velocities, was led to extend the same relation to the planets and to suppose that they emit sounds proportional to their respective distances from the Earth, thus forming a celestial concert too melodious to affect the gross ears of mankind. This is what is meant by the music or harmony of the spheres. Plato supposes this harmony to be produced by Sirens.

(2) According to the Ptolemaic system of astronomy the Earth was the centre of our universe, and the apparent motions of the other heavenly bodies were due to the fact that they were fixed *in transparent spheres* enclosing the central Earth at different

distances. Plato recognised only eight of such spheres, the outermost being that of the Fixed Stars. Later, two more spheres were added—the crystalline sphere outside of that of the fixed stars, and, beyond all, the Tenth Sphere, called the Primum Mobile or 'first moved,' which contained all the others. In the above passage Milton speaks of the music of the spheres as being produced by the nine Muses that sit upon the nine inner spheres.

(3) Milton seems to have had in view a passage in Plato's *Republic* (bk. x.). Fate or Necessity has on her knees a spindle of adamant, and the turning of this spindle directs the motions of the heavenly bodies. "The spindle turns on the knees of Necessity; and on the upper surface of each circle is a siren who goes round with it, hymning a single sound and note. The eight together form one harmony, and round about at equal intervals there is another band, three in number, each sitting upon her throne: these are the Fates, daughters of Necessity, who are clothed in white raiment and have crowns of wool upon their heads, Lachesis and Clotho and Atropos, who accompany with their voices the harmony of the sirens." In Hesiod the three Fates are thus distinguished: Clotho spins the thread of human life; Lachesis guides it and thus assigns his fate to every man; and Atrŏpos is the fate that cannot be avoided. The last is usually represented with some cutting instrument.

65. **vital shears**: the shears held by Atropos, who cuts the thread *of life*. Comp. *Lyc.* 75, where they are called "abhorred shears": see also *Epitaph on M. of W.* 28.

66. **adamantine spindle.** 'Adamantine' is from the Greek, and means 'that which is unconquerable.' The word 'diamond' is cognate. Milton signifies thus that resistance to the course of Fate is useless. 'Spindle,' the pin or stick from which a thread is *spun*.

68. **sweet compulsion.** There is a kind of verbal contradiction or oxymoron in these words which renders them very striking: comp. *Son.* xxiii. 14; *Par. Lost*, ix. 47; also l. 39 above.

69. **daughters of Necessity**: see notes above, l. 63.

70. **unsteady Nature**, *i.e.* Nature that would otherwise be *unsteady* or not subject to law. 'Unsteady' does not occur elsewhere in Milton's poems.

71. **low world**, the mundane or terrestrial world; in *Comus* it is "this dim spot which men call Earth." It may be noted here that 'mundane' means literally 'ordered' or subject to law.

measured motion: comp. Jonson:—

"*Nature is Motion's mother*, as she's yours.
The spring *whence order flows*, that all directs,
And knits the causes with the effects."

Mercury Vindicated.

72. **After the heavenly tune,** *i.e. in accordance with* the music of the spheres.

which none can hear: the construction is, 'which none of human mould can hear.' This is an idea which occurs repeatedly in Milton's prose and poetry—that the music of the spheres might possibly be audible to human beings if they lived pure and spiritual lives. The Genius of the wood could hear it because he was a *good* spirit.

73. **mould,** shape or form.

with gross unpurgèd ear: comp. *Comus*, 458, 997; also *Mid. N. D.* iii. 1—

> "And I will *purge* thy *grossness* so,
> That thou wilt like an airy spirit go."

'Gross' = dense or coarse; 'unpurged' = impure. See also *Mer. of Ven.* v. 1.

74. **blaze**: a favourite word of Milton's with reference to a person's fame or 'praise'; see *Lyc.* 74.

75. **her immortal praise Whose,** *i.e.* the immortal praise *of her* whose: see note, *L'Alleg.* 124.

76. **for her most fit,** *i.e.* (such music were) most suitable for her to hear: comp. *befits*, l. 92.

77. **hit,** produce. Contrast its sense in *Il Pens.* 14.

79. **lesser,** inferior: a double comparative. See note, *Il Pens.* 51.

80. **assay,** attempt, try. In this general sense we now use *essay*, which is radically the same word. *Assay* is now used chiefly of the trial or testing of metals.

81. **And so attend ye,** *i.e.* 'and thus I will escort you towards her glittering seat of state.' See note on l. 40.

state: see note on l. 14.

82. **all, that are of noble stem.** This does not mean, 'all of you that are of noble stem': the words may be rearranged thus, 'Where ye, that are *all* of noble stem, may approach,' etc. 'Stem' = family · by a similar figure of speech we speak of 'the *branches* of a family,' 'a family-*tree*,' etc.

83. This line is often referred to as harsh, owing to the number of sibilants introduced. This is here mentioned in order that the student may observe how few such lines are in Milton's poetry.

84. **enamelled,** bright. This is the radical sense of the word, and that in which Milton uses it. As enamelling is generally in colours the word has acquired a secondary sense, 'variegated.' 'Enamel' is literally a 'molten-like or glass-like coating': it is cognate with *melt*. See *Lyc.* 139.

85. **print of step**, foot-print. Comp. *Com.* 897, 'printless feet.'

87. **warbled string**. 'Warbled' may be taken either in an active sense (= warbling), or in a passive sense (= made to warble or trill). The participle would, in the latter case, be used proleptically, denoting the result of the action implied in the verb 'touch.' Comp. *Com.* 854: "warbled song."

89. **branching**, wide-spreading: see note on *L'Alleg.* 58.

star-proof, with foliage so dense that no light can penetrate. Comp. *Par. Lost*, ix. 1086, "where highest woods impenetrable to star or sunlight," etc.: also Shelley's *Cloud*, "Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof." For Milton's use of 'proof' see note, *Il Pens.* 158. It has been objected that the elm is not 'star-proof,' its foliage being far from close. The references to the elm and the idea implied in 'star-proof' are both so common in Milton that he may, by a poetical privilege, have brought the two ideas together without recalling the actual appearance of the tree.

91. **bring you where**, *i.e.* 'bring you (to the place) where.'

93. **deity**: comp. lines 4, 25.

94. **Such a rural Queen**, etc.: no such queen has ever ruled in Arcadia. 'Rural' is here used in its strict sense = of the country (Lat. *rus*, the country as opposed to the town).

96. That part of the entertainment which intervened between the second song (sung by the Genius) and the third song (sung by the company) is lost to us. The final words of both songs are the same, as if implying that the promise made by the spirit had been fulfilled to the satisfaction of all.

97. **sandy Ladon's lilied banks**. Ladon was a river of Arcadia, and the epithet 'sandy' has been applied to it both by Latin and English writers. Ovid speaks of the Ladon and the Tiber as sandy (*arenosus*), as Browne and Sidney do of the former.

'Lilied,' overgrown with lilies: adjectives in *ed* are formed from nouns in two ways; (1) when the noun (as here) has a verbal signification, the participle being used as an adjective; (2) where there is no verbal significance, the suffix being added to the noun, *e.g.* ragged, wretched, left-handed, etc.

98. **old Lycæus**: a lofty mountain in Arcadia, and one of the chief seats of the worship of Zeus. Pan, the chief seat of whose worship was in Arcadia, had a temple on this mountain. Hence both Pan and Zeus are surnamed Lycaeus.

Cyllene hoar: the highest mountain in Peloponnesus, on the borders of Arcadia; it was sacred to Mercury. The word is here a dissyllable; in Greek it is a trisyllable.

99. **Trip,** dance: comp. *L'Alleg.* 33.

twilight ranks. 'Twilight' is here used as an adjective (A.S. *twi*, double): the word strictly denotes 'double light,' but it is used rather in the sense of 'half light.' Comp. *Il Pens.* 133.

100. **Though Erymanth.** Erymanthus, a tributary of the river Alpheus (see l. 30): the mountain in which it rose was of the same name, but it is so usual in poetry to speak of streams as weeping that we may suppose the river to be referred to here.

Grammatically the line is a concessive clause, and the verb is in the subjunctive because it refers to the future; see 'shall give,' next line.

101. **give ye thanks**: the meaning is, 'A more fertile soil will reward you for your coming, by pasturing your flocks.' For the use of 'ye' see note, l. 40.

102. **Mænalus,** a mountain of Arcadia, so celebrated that in Roman poetry the adjective *Maenalis* is often used as equivalent to *Arcadian.* Pan, whose favourite abode it was, is called "the Maenalian god."

104. **grace.** The word may be used here with something of the sense of Lat. *gratiam habere*, to be grateful: "it will be a more thankful task to serve the queen of this place than to continue to dwell in Arcadia."

106. **Syrinx**: an Arcadian nymph, who, being pursued by Pan, fled into the river Ladon, and at her own request was changed into a reed, of which Pan then made his flute (or syrinx). Milton implies that even Syrinx might serve this "rural Queen,"—a great compliment to the Countess of Derby, seeing that Jonson in *The Satyr* had likened Queen Anne to Syrinx, and that Spenser had addressed Queen Elizabeth as the daughter of Syrinx. Jonson's masque had been "presented" by the father of the Countess, so that she may possibly have seen it.

Pan's mistress. Pan was the god of flocks and shepherds among the Greeks: as the god of every thing connected with pastoral life he was fond of music, and the inventor of the shepherd's flute. He was dreaded by travellers to whom he appeared, startling them with sudden terror. Hence extreme fright was ascribed to Pan, and called a Panic fear; this is the origin of the word *panic.*

'Mistress,' a woman loved: formed from *master* by the suffix *ess.*

LYCIDAS.

This poem was written in November, 1637, and appeared in a volume of memorial verses published at Cambridge in 1638 as a tribute to Mr. Edward King. King, a son of Sir John King, Secretary for Ireland, had been admitted to Christ's College, Cambridge in 1626, so that he was a fellow-student of Milton's. He was made a Fellow in 1630, and seems to have become extremely popular. He was a young man of 'hopeful parts,' and had shown some skill in poetical composition. In 1633 he took his degree of M.A., and remained at Cambridge to study for the Church. In the vacation of 1637 he sailed from Chester on a visit to his friends in Ireland: the ship was wrecked off the Welsh coast and King went down with it. His death was much lamented by his college friends and they got together a collection of tributary verses to which Milton contributed *Lycidas*.

Lycidas is a pastoral elegy, *i.e.* the poet speaks as a shepherd bewailing the loss of a fellow-shepherd. The subjoined analysis will guide the student in reading it. We do not look in the poem for the keen sense of personal loss that we find in Tennyson's *In Memoriam* or in Milton's own *Epitaphium Damonis*, nor for the sustained scorn that animates Shelley's *Adonais;* but in its tender regret for a dead friend, in its sweet "touches of idealised rural life," in its glimpses of a suppressed passion that was soon to break forth, and in its mingling of a truly religious spirit with all its classical imagery, it reveals to us the greatness of the poetical genius of Milton. It "marks the point of transition from the early Milton, the Milton of mask, pastoral, and idyll, to the quite other Milton, who, after twenty years of hot party struggle, returned to poetry in another vein, never to the 'woods and pastures' of which he took a final leave in *Lycidas*." (Pattison.)

Analysis.

I. The pastoral proper (the poet sings as shepherd):

1. Occasion of the poem, - - - - - 1-14
2. Invocation of the Muses, - - - - - 15-22
3. Poet's personal relations with Lycidas, - - 23-36
4. Strain of sorrow and indignation; the loss great and inexplicable:—
   (1) Poet's own sense of loss, - - - - 37-49
   (2) The guardian Nymphs could not prevent it, 50-57
   (3) The Muse herself could not prevent it, though he was her true son, - - - 58-63

[*First rise to a higher mood:* the true poet and the nature of his reward] - - - - - - - 64-84

(4) Neptune was not to blame for the loss, - 85-102
(5) Camus, representing Cambridge, bewails his loss, - - - - - - - - 103-107
(6) St. Peter, the guardian of the Church, sorely misses Lycidas as a true son, - - - 108-112
[*Second rise to a higher mood.* The false sons of the Church and their coming ruin,] - - - - 113-131
(7) All nature may well mourn his loss, - - 132-151
(8) Sorrow loses itself in "false surmise," and Hope arises, - - - - - - 152-164
5. Strain of joy and hope; Lycidas is not dead, - 165-185
II. The Epilogue (the poet reviews the shepherd's song), 186-193

Notes.

Monody: an ode in which a single mourner bewails (Greek *monos*, single: *ōdē*, a song or ode). *Lycidas* is a typical example of the Elegy, with much of the intense feeling peculiar to the less sustained Ode proper; but its form is that of the Pastoral, and its varied metrical structure is totally unlike that of the modern elegiac stanza.

height: so spelt in both the editions published in Milton's lifetime, though his usual spelling is 'highth.'

1. **Yet once more.** These words have reference to the fact that Milton had written no English verse for three years, and that he did not yet consider himself sufficiently matured for the poet's task. The words do not imply that he is once more to write an elegiac poem, as if he were referring back to his poems, *On the death of a Fair Infant* and *Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester*: he is thinking of *Comus* (written in 1634).

laurels, etc. Laurels, myrtles and ivy are here addressed because they are, in classical poetry, associated with the Muses, and not because the poet thinks them to be specially suggestive of mourning. The laurel has been associated with poetry since the time of the Greeks, who believed that it communicated the poetic spirit: the Romans regarded it as sacred to Apollo. Comp. *Son.* xvi. 9.

2. **myrtles brown.** 'Brown' is a classical epithet of the myrtle; in one of his Odes Horace contrasts the brown myrtle with the evergreen ivy. It was sacred to Venus, and at Greek banquets each singer held a myrtle bough.

ivy never sere, evergreen ivy: it was sacred to Bacchus, and in Virgil we read of the laurel of victory being twined with the ivy. Horace also speaks of ivy as being used to deck the brows of the learned: in Christian art it is the symbol of everlasting life.

'Sere'=dry, withered; the same word as *sear* (A.S. *sedrian*, to dry up), and cognate with the verb 'to sear,' *i.e.* to burn up.

3. **I come**, etc. "I come to make a poet's garland for myself," *i.e.* to write a poem.

harsh and crude, bitter and unripe, because plucked before their due time! this refers to the poet's own unripeness, not to that of Lycidas. Milton's 'mellowing year' had not yet come; his opinion was that poetry was a "work not to be raised from the heat of youth . . but by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge." 'Crude' is literally 'raw'; hence 'unprepared,' as 'crude salt'; and hence 'undeveloped,' *e.g.*—

> "Deep versed in books, and shallow in himself,
> *Crude*, or intoxicate, collecting toys."
> *Par. Reg.* iv.

'Cruel' (Lat. *crudelis*) is from the same root.

4. **forced fingers rude**. On the order of the words compare note on *L'Alleg.* 40. 'Forced' = unwilling, not because the poet was unwilling to mourn his friend's loss, but unwilling yet to turn again to poetry. 'Rude': comp. *Il Pens.* 136.

5. **Shatter your leaves**. 'Shatter' is a doublet of *scatter*, and here (as in *Par. Lost*, x. 1063) the former is used where we should now use the latter. 'Shatter' suggests the employment of force, and therefore agrees with the sense of the preceding line.

mellowing year: time of maturity. 'Mellow' has here an active sense, *i.e.* 'making mellow.' The word originally means 'soft' like ripe fruit, and hence its present use: it is cognate with *melt* and *mild*. Warton objects to the phrase here used as inaccurate, because the leaves of the laurel, myrtle, and ivy are not affected by the mellowing year: the poet, however, is influenced by the personal application of the words, and is thinking of the poetical fruit he was himself to produce.

6. **sad occasion dear**: see note on l. 4. The original sense of 'dear' is 'precious' (A.S. *deore*), and hence its present meanings in English, viz. 'costly' and 'beloved.' But it is used by Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton in an entirely different sense: comp. 'my *dearest* foe,' 'hated his father *dearly*,' '*dear* peril,' etc. Some would say that 'dear' is here a corruption of *dire*, but this is a mere assumption, though the sense is similar. Craik suggests "that the notion properly involved in it of love, having first become generalised into that of a strong affection of any kind, had thence passed on to that of such an emotion the very reverse of love." The fact seems to be that 'dear' as 'precious' came to denote close relation, and hence was applied generally to whatever intimately concerned a person.

7. **Compels**: the verb is singular, though there are two nominatives, for both together convey the one idea that, but for the occasion of Lycidas' death, the poet would not have been constrained to write.

to disturb your season due: to pluck you before your proper season. On 'due' see *Il Pens.* 155. 'Season' is often used to denote 'the usual or proper time'; *e.g.* we speak of fruit as being 'in season,' when it is fit for use, and the adjective 'seasonable' = occurring in good time: comp. *Son.* ii. 7.

8. **ere his prime**: see note on *L'Alleg.* 107. 'Prime' here denotes 'the best part of life': contrast its meaning in *Son.* ix. 1.

9. **peer**, equal (Lat. *par*): see *Arc.* 75.

10. **Who would not sing**, etc.: a rhetorical question, equivalent to 'No one could refuse to sing,' etc.: comp. '*Neget quis carmina Gallo?*' Virgil, *Ecl.* x. 3. The name *Lycidas* occurs in the pastorals of Theocritus and in Virgil's ninth *Eclogue*.

knew Himself to sing, was himself able to sing, *i.e.* was a poet. Comp. Horace's phrase, "*Reddere* qui voces jam *scit* puer."

11. **build the lofty rhyme**: comp. the Lat. phrase "condere carmen," to build up a song (Hor. *Epis.* i. 3). 'Build' has reference to the regular structure of the verse: it may also allude to the fact that King had written several short poetical pieces in Latin. 'Rhyme' is here used for 'verse'; the original spelling was 'rime,' and 'rhyme' does not occur in English before 1550: there is now a tendency to revert to the older and more correct spelling. The A.S. *rim* meant 'number,' and *rimcraft*, arithmetic; then the word was applied in a secondary sense to verse having regularity in the number of its syllables and accents, and finally to verse having final syllables of like sound. The change of *i* to *y*, and the insertion of *h* is due to confusion with the Greek word *rhythmos*, measured motion. Shakespeare has 'rime'; and Milton in his prefatory remarks on the verse of *Par. Lost* uses the spelling 'rime,' and speaks of it as the "jingling sound of like endings."

13. **welter**, roll about: in *Par. Lost*, i. 78, Milton speaks of Satan as *weltering* in Hell, in which case the use of the word more nearly accords with modern usage.

to, here seems to have the sense of 'in accordance with': comp. lines 33, 44. The use of the prepositions in Elizabethan writers is extremely varied.

It will be noticed that there is no rhyme to this line; so with lines 1, 15, 22, 39, 51, 82, 91, 92, 161. But though these lines have no rhymes adjacent to them, they do not detract from the music of the verse: there are only about sixty different endings in the whole poem, and if assonantal rhymes be admitted the *number is still* further reduced. Besides, though line 1 has no

adjacent rhyme, similar final sounds occur in lines 61, 63, 165, 167, 182, 183, just as lines 2, 5, 6, 9, 12, 14 rhyme together. This partly explains the resonance and beauty of the verse.

14. **meed**, recompense: comp. "A rosy garland is the victor's meed." *Tit. Andron.* i. 2.

melodious tear, tearful melody, an elegiac poem. Comp. the title of Spenser's *Tears of the Muses;* also *Epitaph on M. of W.* 55.

15. **Sisters of the sacred well**, the nine Muses, daughters of Jove: they are often mentioned in Greek poetry as the nymphs of Helicon, because Mount Helicon in Boeotia was one of their favourite haunts; on this mountain were two fountains sacred to the Muses; hence Milton's allusion to 'the sacred well.' Hesiod, in his *Theogony*, speaks of the Muses of Helicon dancing round "the altar of the mighty son of Kronos," *i.e.* Jupiter: this explains the allusion to "the seat of Jove" (Hales). A simpler explanation is that the sacred well is the Pierian fountain at the foot of Mount Olympus, where the Muses were born, and that the 'seat of Jove' is Mount Olympus.

17. **somewhat loudly**, not too softly.

sweep the string, strike the lyre. Elsewhere Milton calls music "stringed noise."

18. **Hence**: see note *L'Alleg.* 1.

coy excuse. 'Coy' = hesitating: the word is generally applied only to persons in the sense of 'shy'; it is the same word as 'quiet,' both being from Lat. *quietus*, the former through French. Shakespeare uses it as an intrans. verb, and it also occurs in Elizabethan English in the sense of 'to allure.'

19. **Muse**, poet inspired by the Muse: hence the pronoun 'he' in l. 21: see *Son.* i. 13, note. Lines 19 to 22 form a parenthesis: l. 23 resumes the main theme.

20. **lucky words**, words of good luck, words expressing a good wish: see note, *Epitaph on M. of W.* 31.

my destined urn. The sense is: "As *I* now write a poem to the memory of Lycidas, so may some one, when *I* am dead, write kindly words about *me*." 'Destined urn' = the death that I am destined to die: 'urn' is the vessel in which the Romans deposited the ashes of their dead, sometimes inscribed with the name and history of the dead: comp. 'storied urn,' Gray's *Elegy*, 41.

21. **as he passes**, in passing: comp. Gray's *Elegy*, 20, 'passing tribute of a sigh.'

'Turn,' *i.e.* may turn, co-ordinate with 'may favour' and (may) 'bid,' optative mood.

22. **bid fair peace**, etc.: 'pray that sweet peace may rest upon me in death.' 'Bid,' in the sense of 'pray,' has probably no radical connection with 'bid' = to command, and is nearly obsolete: 'to bid beads' was originally 'to pray prayers' (A.S. *bed*, a prayer). The word *bead* was then applied to the little balls used for counting the prayers, and is now used of any small ball. 'Be' is infinitive: see note on *Arc.* 13.

sable shroud: 'the darkness in which I am shrouded,' previously referred to figuratively as 'my destined urn.' Some interpret the words literally = 'my black coffin.' Etymologically 'shroud' is something cut off, and is allied to 'shred'; hence used of a garment. In *Par. Lost*, x. 1068, Milton uses it in this sense, and in *Comus*, 147, in the general sense of a covering or shelter. Its present uses as a noun are chiefly restricted to 'a dress for the dead' and (in the plural) to part of the rigging of a vessel.

23. **nursed**, etc.: a pastoral way of saying that they had been members of the same college at Cambridge, viz. Christ's.

24. **Fed the same flock**, employed ourselves in the same pursuits.

25. **the high lawns**: comp. *L'Alleg.* 71.

26. **Under the opening eyelids**, etc., *i.e.* at dawn. Morn is here personified: comp. *Job*, iii. 9, "Neither let it behold the eyelids of the morning"; Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, ii. 3, "the grey-eyed morn"; see also *Son.* i. 5. The poet represents himself and Lycidas as spending the whole day together, from dawn to sultry noon, and from noon to dewy eve. As Warton points out, Milton was a very early riser, both in winter and summer, and the sunrise had great charm for him. In this poem, however, he may refer to the fixed hours of college duty.

27. **We drove a-field.** The prefix *a* is a corruption of *on*, the noun and preposition being fused together in one adverb: see *L'Alleg.* 20. 'We' is in agreement with 'both,' l. 27; and the verb 'drove' may be regarded as transitive, its object 'the same flock' being understood.

heard What time, etc. There are two possible renderings of this passage: (1) 'heard at what time the grey-fly,' etc., the object of 'heard' being the whole of line 28; or (2) 'heard the grey-fly at what time (she) winds,' etc. The latter, though it makes the object of the principal verb also the subject of the dependent verb, is preferable, for in Latin it frequently happens that words belonging to the principal clause are drawn into the relative clause.

28. **grey-fly**, the trumpet-fly, so called from the sharp humming sound produced by it, generally in the heat of the day; hence the allusion to its "sultry horn."

29. **Battening**, *sc.* 'and afterwards.' Battening = feeding, making fat: here used transitively, though generally intransitive = to grow fat. The same root is seen in *better*. In this line *with* = along with, at the time of.

30. **Oft till the star**, etc. 'Oft' modifies 'battening.' The star here referred to is Hesperus, an appellation of the planet Venus: see note, *Song on May Morning*, 1. In *Comus*, 93, it is "the star that bids the shepherds fold."

31. **sloped his westering wheel**: similarly in *Comus*, 98, the setting sun is called 'the *slope* sun,' and we read of 'his glowing axle' just as here we read of the star's 'wheel' or course in the heavens. 'Westering' = passing towards the west: now obsolete.

32. **rural ditties**: pastoral language for the early poetic efforts of Milton and King. 'Ditty' (Lat. *dictatum*, something dictated) originally meant the words of a song as distinct from the musical accompaniment; now applied to any little poem intended to be sung: comp. "am'rous ditties," *Par. Lost*, i. 447.

33. **Tempered**, attuned, timed (Lat. *temperare*, to regulate); the word qualifies ditties, and hence the semi-colon at end of l. 33. Masson has a semi-colon at end of l. 32; 'tempered' would then be absolute construction, or it would qualify 'Satyrs.'

to the oaten flute. 'To'; see note l. 13. The oaten flute is the flute or pipe made of reeds, and the favourite instrument in pastoral poetry: in Latin it is *avena* (= oats, a straw, and hence a shepherd's pipe): comp. lines 86, 88. 'Oaten'; the termination 'en' denotes 'made of': modern English has a tendency to use the noun as an adjective in such cases, *e.g.* a *gold* ring. Most of the adjectives in 'en' that still survive do not now denote the material, but simply resemblance, *e.g.* 'golden hair' = hair of the colour of gold. Such adjectives as birchen, beechen, firen, glassen, hornen, treen, thornen, etc., are now obsolete.

34. **Satyrs** ... **Fauns**; pastoral language for the men attending Cambridge at the same time as Milton and King. The Satyrs of Greek mythology were the representatives of the luxuriance of nature, and were always described as engaged in light pleasures, such as dancing, playing on the lute, or syrinx (see *Arc.* 106), etc. The Romans confounded them with their Fauni, represented as half men, half goats (Lat. *semicaper*), with cloven feet and horns; the chief was Faunus, whom the Romans identified with Pan (see *Arc.* 106).

36. **old Damœtas**: this pastoral name occurs in Virgil, Theocritus, and Sidney: it here probably refers to Dr. W. Chappell, the tutor of Christ's College in Milton's time. Masson thinks it may be "Joseph Meade or some other well-remembered Fellow of Christ's."

38. **Now thou**, etc., *i.e.* now that thou art gone = seeing that thou art gone: comp. *Son.* xx. 2.

must return: 'must' here expresses certainty with regard to the future = thou wilt certainly never return. In ordinary use it implies either compulsion, *e.g.* 'He must obey me,' or permission, *e.g.* 'You must not come in': the latter is the original sense of the A.S. verb *motan* (past tense *moste*).

39. **Thee**: object of 'mourn,' l. 41. Ovid (*Met.* xi.) similarly represents birds, beasts, and trees as lamenting the death of Orpheus.

40. **gadding**, straggling. To *gad* is to wander about idly: Bacon calls Envy a *gadding* passion, and in the Bible we find—"Why *gaddest* thou about so much to change thy way," *Jer.* ii. Cicero uses the word *erraticus* (wandering) in connection with the vine.

41. **their echoes**, *i.e.* of the caves: comp. Song to Echo in *Comus*. In Shelley's *Adonais* the same idea occurs—

> "Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
> And *feeds her grief* with his remembered lay."

42 **hazel copses green**. See note *L'Alleg.* 40.

'Copse,' a wood of small growth, is a corruption of *coppice* (Fr. *couper*, to cut).

44. **Fanning**: moving their leaves in unison with the music: with 'to' in this line, comp. 'to' in lines 13 and 33.

45. Lines 45 to 48 are in apposition to 'such,' line 49: thus 'Thy loss to shepherd's ear was such' = 'Thy loss to shepherd's ear was as killing as,' etc. The word 'such' is redundant, being rendered necessary by the separation of the words 'as killing' from the rest of the principal clause.

killing, deadly, terrible.

canker: see *Arc.* 53; the more definite form 'canker-worm' is often used, just as 'taint-worm' is used in the next line. Warton notes that Shakespeare is fond of this simile.

46. **taint-worm**, also called the 'taint.' "There is found in summer a spider called a *taint*, of a red colour, and so little that ten of the largest will hardly outweigh a grain." Browne, *Vulgar Errours*. 'Taint' is cognate with *tint*, *tinge*, and *tincture*.

weanling herds, young animals that have just been weaned from the mother's milk. *Ling* is the diminutive suffix, as in year*ling*, dar*ling*, found*ling*. 'To wean' (A.S. *wenian*) is strictly 'to accustom to,' but is now used only in the sense of 'to disaccustom to.' The connection between the two meanings is obvious. 'Weanling' also occurs as 'yeanling' or 'eanling.'

47. **gay wardrobe**, bright and varied colours. By metonymy

'wardrobe,' in which clothes are kept, is applied to its contents: the flowers are here said to clothe themselves in gay colours. 'Wardrobe' = guard-robe (Fr. *garde-robe*): the *usual* law in such compounds is that the first word denotes the purpose for which the thing denoted by the second is used, *e.g.* inkstand, teaspoon, writing-desk.

48. **white-thorn**, hawthorn: the flower is sometimes called "May blossom."

49. **to shepherd's ear**, *sc.* 'when heard by him.' The use of 'killing' is here an instance of syllepsis: as applied to the herds, etc., it means literally 'deadly'; as used in this line it means 'dreadful.'

50. **Where were ye**, etc. This is imitated from the first Idyll of Theocritus, and the tenth Eclogue of Virgil, "but with the substitution of West British haunts of the Muses for their Greek haunts in those classic passages."

remorseless deep, unpitying or cruel sea; an instance of the pathetic fallacy which attributes human feelings to inanimate objects.

52. **neither**. This answers to 'nor' in line 55, so that the sense is "You were playing *neither* on the steep ... *nor* on the shaggy top."

the steep, 'the mountain where the Druidic bards are buried.' Milton probably refers to a mountain in Carnarvon, called Penmaenmawr, or to Kerig-i-Druidion in Denbigh, where there was a burying-place of the Druids. The Druids were the minstrels, priests, and teachers among the ancient Celts of Britain: in his *History of England* Milton calls them "our philosophers, the Druids." The word 'your' implies that the bards were followers of the Muses.

54. **shaggy top of Mona high**: the high interior of the island of Anglesey (known by the Romans as Mona), once the chief haunt of the Welsh Druids. The island was once thickly wooded: Selden says, "The British Druids took this isle of Anglesey, then well-stored with thick wood and religious groves; in so much that it was called *Inis Dowil*, 'The Dark Isle,' for their chief residence." This explains the allusion in the words 'shaggy top.'

55. **Deva ... wizard stream**, the river Dee, on which stands Chester, the port from which King sailed on his ill-fated voyage. In his poem *At a Vacation Exercise* Milton calls it "ancient hallowed Dee." Spenser also speaks of it as haunted by magicians, and Drayton tells how, being the ancient boundary between England and Wales, it foreboded evil fortune to that country towards which it changed its course and good to the other. The word 'wizard' is therefore very appropriately used

here. In fact these lines (52-55) are interesting for two reasons: (1) their appropriateness to the subject, seeing that King was drowned off the Welsh coast; (2) their evidence that Milton had already been engaged in careful reading of British legendary history with a view to the composition of an epic poem on some British subject—the first hints of which are conveyed in the Latin poems *Mansus* (1638) and *Epitaphium Damonis* (1639). In the former of these we find reference to the Druids, and in the latter to King Arthur.

'Wizard' is one of the few survivals in English of words with the termination *ard* or *art*, *e.g.* sluggard, braggart: the suffix had an intensive, and also a somewhat contemptuous force, though here 'wizard' merely denotes 'magical.'

56. **Ay me**! this exclamatory phrase = ah me! Its form is due to the French *aymi* = 'ah, for me!' and has no connection with 'ay' or 'aye' = yes. Comp. Lat. *me miserum.*

fondly, foolishly: comp. *Il Pens.* 6 and *Son.* xix. 8.

57. There is an anacolouthon or break in the construction in the middle of this line. The poet, in addressing the nymphs, is about to say, 'Had you been there, you might have saved Lycidas'; but, recollecting that their presence could have done no good, he adds, 'for what could that have done?'

58. **the Muse herself**: Calliope, the Muse of epic poetry, and mother of Orpheus, who is here called 'her enchanting son' (see *L'Alleg.* 145, note). His grief for the loss of Eurydice led him to treat the Thracian women with contempt, and in revenge they tore him in pieces in the excitement of their Bacchanalian festivals (here called 'the hideous roar'). His head was thrown into the river Hebrus, and, being carried to the sea, was washed across to Lesbos, an island in the Ægean Sea. His lyre was also swept ashore there. Both traditions simply express the fact that Lesbos was the first great seat of the music of the lyre.

60. **universal nature**, all nature, animate and inanimate: see note on line 39.

61. **rout**, a disorderly crowd (as explained above). The word is also used in the sense of 'a defeat'; and is cognate with *route*, *rote*, and *rut*. The explanation is that all come from the Lat. *ruptus*, broken: a 'rout' is the breaking up of an army, or a crowd broken up; a 'route' is a way broken through a forest; a 'rote' is a beaten route or track, hence we say "to learn by *rote*"; and a 'rut' is a track left by a wheel.

62. **visage**; see note on *Il Pens.* 13.

63. **swift Hebrus**: a translation of Virgil's *volucrem Hebrum* (*Æn.* i. 321), supposed to be a corrupt reading, as the river is not swift.

64. **what boots it**, etc.: 'Of what profit is it to be a poet in these days when true poetry is slighted? Would it not be better, as many do, to give one's self up to trifling.' The passage is of interest, because (1) it illustrates Milton's high aspirations, and (2) it directs our attention to the historical fact that the literary outburst which began in 1580 was over. The poets who were alive in 1637 were such as Wither, Herrick, Shirley, May, Davenant, Suckling, Crashaw, etc.: they could not be compared with Spenser, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, and others.

The word 'boot' (A.S. *bót*=profit) is now chiefly preserved in the adjective *bootless* = profitless, and in the phrase *to boot*=in addition (where 'boot' is a noun governed by the preposition 'to,' not the infinitive): from this noun comes the A.S. verb *bétan*, to amend, to make *better*.

uncessant, incessant. The tendency of modern English is to use a prefix belonging to the same language as the body of the word, so that 'cessant,' which is of Latin origin, takes the Lat. negative prefix *in*. This rule was not recognised in older English; hence in Milton we find such forms as 'unactive,' 'uncessant,' and in other writers, 'unpossible,' 'unglorious,' 'unpatient,' 'unhonest,' etc. On the other hand, there are anomalies in our present English that did not exist in the Elizabethan literature, *e.g.* 'uncertain' (formerly and more regularly 'incertain'), 'unfortunate,' etc.: comp. l. 176.

65. **tend**: the trans. verb (as here) is a short form of 'attend.' 'Tend,' to move in a certain direction, is intransitive.

homely, slighted, etc. These adjectives qualify 'trade, not 'shepherd.' 'Trade' here denotes the practice of poetry. In lines 113-120 the shepherd's trade is not poetry, but the work of the Church. The former application of the words is found in all pastoral poetry, the latter in the Scriptures.

In *Com.* 748, Milton gives the derivation of 'homely'; 'It is for homely features to keep home'; comp. *Son.* xii a. 20, note. Spenser, in his *Shepherd's Calendar*, speaks of the 'homely shepherd's quill.'

66. **strictly**, rigorously, devotedly.

meditate the thankless Muse: apply one's self to the thankless task of writing poetry.

'Meditate' is here used transitively like the Lat. *meditor*, which does not mean merely to ponder or think upon, but to apply one's self with close attention to a subject. The phrase occurs in Virgil (*Ecl.* i. 2; vi. 8). As a transitive verb, 'meditate' has now the meaning of 'purpose'; *e.g.* he meditated revenge.

'Thankless,' as applied to the Muse,' is 'ungrateful': comp. Virgil, *Æn.* vii. 425.

67. **Were it not**, etc.: subjunctive mood.

use, are accustomed (to do). The present tense of the verb 'to use' is obsolete in this sense: we can say 'he used to do this,' but not 'he uses to do this.' The present tense is found in the following passage: "They *use* to place him that shall be their captain upon a stone always reserved for that purpose."—*Spenser*. Compare such words as *ought, must, durst, wot, wont*, etc., all originally past tenses: see note, *Il. Pens.* 37.

68. **Amaryllis ... Neæra's hair.** These are the names of imaginary shepherdesses from the Greek and Latin pastorals. (See Virgil's first three *Eclogues.*) Milton expresses, in one of his prose works, great fondness for the 'smooth elegiac poets,' but in the last of his Latin Elegies he announces his intention of turning his mind to other subjects—

. . . "Learning taught me, in his shady bower,
To quit Love's servile yoke, and spurn his power."
Cowper's Translation.

Warton thinks that the allusion to Amaryllis and Neæra is made with special reference to certain poems by Buchanan in which he addresses females by these names.

69. **tangles**, locks or curls; comp. Peele's *David and Bethsabe*—

"Now comes my lover tripping like the roe,
And brings my longings *tangled* in her hair."

70. Fame is the spur that incites the noble mind to high efforts: comp. *Par. Reg.* iii. 25—

"Glory, the reward
That sole excites to high attempts the flame
Of most erected spirits, most tempered pure
Ethereal, who all pleasures else despise,
All treasures and all gain esteem as dross,
And dignities and powers, all but the highest."

Also Spenser: "Due praise, that is the *spur* of doing well."

clear, in the sense of Lat. *clarus*, noble, pure. 'Spirit' is the object of 'doth raise.'

71. This bracketed line is in apposition to 'Fame,' though in reality it is not fame that is meant but the love of fame, which, as Massinger says, is 'the last weakness wise men put off.' The idea is found in *Tacitus*: "Etiam sapientibus cupido gloriae novissima exuitur"; and by the use of the word *that* in line 71, Milton seems to signify that he regarded the expression as a well-known one.

72. This line states the high efforts to which the love of fame

will incite men, viz., "to scorn delights and live laborious days."

73. **guerdon,** reward: grammatically, object of 'find.' The formation of this word is peculiar; the second part is from Lat. *donum*, gift; and the first part from an old High German word meaning 'back,' and corresponding to the Lat. prefix *re* in *re*ward, etc.

74. **blaze**: comp. *Arc.* 74 and *Par. Reg.* iii. 47: "For what is glory but the blaze of fame?" The whole of the passage in *Par. Reg.*, like this part of *Lycidas*, has a certain biographical interest, for we see here Milton's estimate of the worth of popular applause.

75. **blind Fury**; nomin. to verb 'comes.'
The three goddesses of vengeance were called Furies by the Romans, but Milton's reference to 'the abhorred shears' shows that he is thinking of one of the Fates (see *Arc.* 65, note), viz. Atropos. She is here said to be blind because she is no respecter of persons. Milton probably used the word *Fury* in a general sense as signifying the cruelty of Fate, or he may mean to denote Destiny: comp. Shak. *King John*, iv. 2, "Think you I have the shears of Destiny."

76. **thin-spun life,** *i.e.* the thin-spun or fragile thread of life, in allusion to the uncertainty of human life as shown in the case of Edward King. For the form of the adjective comp. *Il Pens.* 66.

"**But not the praise.**" Phoebus (*i.e.* Apollo), as the god of song, here checks the poet, reminding him that though Fate may deprive the poet of life it cannot deprive him of his due meed of true praise. The construction is, "Fate slits the thin-spun life, but does not slit the praise": there is therefore a zeugma in 'slits'; it is applied to life in its literal sense 'to cut,' and to praise in the sense of 'to intercept.'

77. **touched my trembling ears,** *i.e.* touched the ears of me trembling: comp. note on *L'Alleg.* 124. Masson's acute note on this is: "A fine poetical appropriation of the popular superstition that the tingling of a person's ears is a sign that people are talking of him. What Milton had been saying about poetic fame might be understood, he saw, as applicable to himself." Comp. Virgil's *Eclog.* vi. 3. The rhymes of lines 70-77 are *a b a b a c a c.*

78. 'Fame is not found in this life, and dwells *neither* in the glittering leaf displayed in the world, *nor* in the wide-spread rumour.'

mortal soil, this earth. The epithet *mortal* is transferred from life to the scene of life. 'Mortal' here denotes 'associated

with death'; Milton also uses it in the senses of 'causing death' = fatal, and 'human.'

79. **Nor** ... **nor**, neither ... nor: common in poetry.

glistering; from the same base as *glisten, glitter, glint, gleam, glow.*

foil, applied to a leaf or thin plate of shining metal placed under a gem to increase its lustre (Lat. *folium*, a leaf): so Fame is not a gem that requires to be set off by the use of some foil; it shines by its own light. 'Set off' qualifies 'Fame,' not 'foil.'

80. **lies**, dwells; as often in Old English. Comp. *L'Alleg.* 79.

81. **by**, by means of, *i.e.* because it is perceived by. Comp. "God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity."

82. **perfect witness**, searching and infallible discrimination. The old spelling of this word (which is found in Milton) is *perfet*, the French form being *parfait* (Lat. *perfectus*, done thoroughly).

83. **pronounces lastly**, decides finally: see *Son.* xxi. 3, note.

84. **meed**: see line 14, note. This ends the sublime strain of Phoebus, which (as Milton says in line 87) "was of a higher mood" than the ordinary pastoral. He now returns again to his 'oaten pipe' (see *Analysis*).

85. **Arethuse**: see *Arc.* 30. The poet invokes the fountain of Arethusa in the island of Ortygia, off Sicily, because Theocritus was a Sicilian; hence the words "Sicilian Muse," l. 133. He also invokes the Mincius, which falls into the river Po, below Mantua in North Italy, because Virgil was a native of Mantua. Hence the significance of the words 'honoured flood' and 'vocal reeds.'

88. **my oat**, my pastoral muse. The construction is peculiar, 'oat' being apparently nominative to 'proceeds' and 'listens.' We may either take the nominative *I* out of the possessive *my*, or suppose that the Muse listens; but see note on *L'Alleg.* 122, "judge the prize."

89. **the Herald of the Sea**: Triton, represented by the Romans as bearing a 'wreathed horn' or shell, which he blew at the command of Neptune in order to still the waves of the sea. He is here supposed by Milton to appear 'in Neptune's plea,' *i.e.* to defend him from the suspicion of having caused Lycidas' death by a storm, and to discover the real cause of the shipwreck. 'Plea' and 'plead' are cognate words.

91. **felon**, here used attributively. The origin of the word is doubtful; its radical sense is probably 'treacherous' (as in this passage). In the MS. the poet wrote *fellon*, but this is not, as some think, a different word, though it may be cognate with *fell* = fierce.

92. The mark of interrogation at the end of this line and the use of the present perfect tense 'hath doomed,' show that it gives the actual words of Triton's question; otherwise the dependent verb (by sequence of tenses) would have been 'had doomed.'

mishap: see note, *Epitaph on M. of W.* 31.

93. **of rugged wings**, 'rugged-winged,' having rugged wings, *i.e.* tempestuous.

94. **each beakèd promontory**, each pointed cape. Observe the proximity of the words *every* and *each*, where we might have expected *every ... every*, or *each ... each:* comp. *Com.* 19 and 311. 'Every' is radically = ever each (Old English *everoelc*): it denotes each without exception, and can now only be used with reference to *more than two* objects; 'each' may refer to *two or more.*

95. They (*i.e.* the waves and winds) knew nothing of the fate of Lycidas. Observe the double or feminine rhymes,—*promontory, story.*

96. **sage Hippotadès**; the wise ruler of the winds, Æolus, son of Hippotès: he brings the answer of the winds to the effect "that not a blast was from its dungeon strayed." 'Hippotadès' is a Greek patronymic, formed by the suffix *-des*, seen in Boreades, son of Boreas; Priamides, son of Priam, etc. Comp. Homer's *Odyssey*, x. 2.

97. **was ... strayed**: in modern English we say 'had strayed'; the auxiliary 'have' being now more common than 'be.' See note, *Son.* ii. 6, and comp. 'was dropt,' l. 191.

his dungeon: the winds are probably here personified, hence the pronoun 'his' (but see note, *Il Pens.* 128). Milton's language here is evidently suggested by Virgil's picture of the winds (*Æn.* i. 50), where they are represented as confined within a vast cave: Virgil there speaks of Æolia as the 'fatherland' of the winds, thus poetically endowing them with personality. 'Dungeon,' prison, literally 'the chief tower': it is another form of the old French word *donjon*, from Lat. *dominionem*, and therefore cognate with 'dominion,' 'domain,' etc.

98. **level brine**, the placid sea. 'Brine' denotes salt water, and by a figure of speech is applied to the ocean whose waters are salt.

99. **Panopè and her sister**, the daughters of Nereus, hence called Nereids: in classical mythology they were the nymphs who dwelt in the Mediterranean Sea, distinct from the fresh-water nymphs, and the nymphs of the great Ocean. Their names and duties are given in the *Faery Queene*, iv. 11. 49; see also Virgil, *Georg.* i. 437.

100. **fatal and perfidious bark**, the ill-fated and treacherous ship in which King sailed: it went down in perfectly calm weather, and hence the force of Triton's plea on Neptune's behalf. 'Bark,' also spelt 'barque,' is etymologically the same as 'barge'; but the latter is now only used of a kind of boat. 'Fatal' = appointed by fate; 'perfidious' = faithless (Lat. *per*, away; and *fides*, faith).

101. **Built in the eclipse**: this circumstance is imagined by the poet in order to account for the wreck of the ship, eclipses being popularly supposed to bring misfortune upon all undertakings begun or carried on while they lasted. The moon's eclipse was specially unlucky, but in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* we read also of "disasters in the sun," and similarly in *Par. Lost*, i. 597. An eclipse was supposed to be a favourite occasion for the machinations of witches: in *Macbeth*, iv. 1 we read that "slips of yew slivered in the moon's eclipse" formed one of the ingredients in the witches' cauldron.

rigged with curses dark. To rig a ship is to fit it with the necessary sails, ropes, etc.; and by a bold figure the poet says that King's vessel was fitted out with curses; at least this is the sense if 'with' be taken to mean 'by means of.' Some prefer to interpret 'with' as 'in the midst of,' the sense being that the ship was cursed by the witches while it was being rigged.

102. **That sunk**: 'that,' relative pronoun, antecedent 'bark.' 'Sunk' = sank; for the explanation compare Morris's *English Accidence*—"The verbs *swim, begin, run, drink, shrink, sink, ring, sing, spring*, have for their proper past tenses *swam, began, ran*, etc., preserving the original *a*; but in older writers (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) and in colloquial English we find forms with *u*, which have come from the passive participles."

that sacred head of thine. This is a pleonastic expression: it will be noticed that when the noun denotes the possession of one object only, this form is inadmissible unless preceded by a demonstrative (as here), *e.g.* we can say '*that* body of yours,' because a person has only one body, but we cannot say 'a body of yours,' as this word would imply that one of a number was referred to.

'Sacred': etymologically signifies the same as 'consecrated,' 'set apart,' and hence 'devoted': it may be used here of Lycidas as devoted to death: comp. *Par. Lost*, iii. 208—"To destruction *sacred* and devote."

103. **Camus**: "the genius of the Cam River and of Cambridge University was naturally one of the mourners for Lycidas." 'Reverend sire' is an allusion to the antiquity of the University. *Sire, sir, senior, seignior*, and *signor* all owe their origin to the nomin. or accus. form of the Lat. *senior*, elder.

went footing slow, passed slowly along, wended his way slowly. As Camus comes forward to bewail Lycidas we should naturally read 'came' in this line instead of 'went,' because in modern English the meanings of 'go' and 'come' are opposed. But it is not so here: *went* is radically the past tense of *wend* (A.S. *wendan*, to turn), but is now used in place of the obsolete past of *go*; so that it has become necessary to make a new form for the past tense of 'wend,' viz. *wended*. The original past tense of 'go' was 'yode.' *Wend* is the causal form of *wind*, and is therefore peculiarly appropriate to the winding Cam. It is now nearly obsolete except in the phrase 'to wend one's way.'

'Foot' as a verb is generally followed by the cognate accusative 'it,' but it then denotes sprightly movement, and is therefore unsuitable here (see *L'Alleg.* 33). 'Slow-footing' occurs in Spenser as a compound adjective.

104. **His mantle hairy**, etc. Here 'mantle' and 'bonnet' are in the absolute case. The 'hairy mantle' is the hairy river-weed that is found floating on the Cam, and the 'bonnet' is the sedge that grows in the river and along its edge. In his first Elegy Milton alludes to the reedy or sedgy Cam (*arundiferum Camum, juncosas Cami paludes*). 'Bonnet,' now generally applied to a head-dress worn by women, here denotes (as it still does in Scotland) a man's cap.

105. **Inwrought with figures dim**, having indistinct markings *worked into* it. 'Inwrought' is a participial adjective (as if from a verb *inwork*, which is not in use), qualifying 'bonnet': to *work in* figures into cloth, etc., is to embroider or adorn. Milton refers to the peculiar natural markings seen on the leaves of sedge, especially when they begin to wither.

The edge of the 'sedge bonnet' of the Cam is said to be like the edge of the hyacinth because it is marked: the hyacinth was fabled by the ancients to have sprung from the blood of the Spartan youth Hyacinthus, and the markings on the petals were said to resemble the words ἀἰ ἀἰ (alas! alas!) or the letter Υ, the Greek initial of Hyacinthus: hence the significance of the words 'sanguine' and 'inscribed with woe.' The poet Drummond calls the hyacinth "that sweet flower that bears in *sanguine* spots the tenor of our woes." Similarly Milton fancies that the markings on the sedge may signify the grief of Cambridge for the death of Lycidas.

106. **Like to that sanguine flower.** Here the preposition 'to is expressed after 'like': see note on *Il Pens.* 69. 'Sanguine,' bloody, an illustration of Milton's fondness for the primary sense of words (Lat. *sanguis*, blood): its present meaning is 'hopeful,' and the connecting link between the two meanings is found in the old theory of the four humours of the body, an excess of the

bloody humour making persons of a hopeful disposition. In the primary sense we now use 'sanguinary.'

107. **reft**: see note on 'bereft,' *Son.* xxii. 3.

quoth he, he said: this verb always precedes its nominative, and is used only in the first and third persons: it is really a past tense (though occasionally used as a present), and the original present is seen only in the compound *be-queath*.

pledge, child: comp. Lat. *pignus*, a pledge or security, also applied (generally in the plural) to children or relations.

108. **Last came ... did go**: see note on *Il Pens.* 46.

109. **The Pilot of the Galilean Lake**: St. Peter, here introduced as Head of the Church, because King had been intended for the Church. St. Peter was at first a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee (*Matt.* iv. 18) and became one of the disciples of Christ. It was of him that Christ said: "Upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee *the keys of the kingdom of heaven.*" (*Matt.* xvi. 18. *R. V.*) It was he also whom Christ constituted the Shepherd of the Christian flock by his parting charge: "Feed my lambs." (*John* xxi. 15.) In both of his capacities, as Head and Shepherd of the Christian Church, he mourns the death of one who promised to be a true disciple, unlike the false shepherds who crept into the Church "for their bellies' sake."

110. **Two massy keys**: the keys that St. Peter carried as the symbol of his power are usually spoken of as two in number (though there is no such statement in the Scriptures), because he had power both in heaven and hell, the golden one opening the gates of heaven, and the iron one forcibly closing them: comp. *Com.* 13:

> "that golden key
> That opes the palace of eternity."

'**Massy**,' massive: see note *Il Pens.* 58.

of metals twain, made of two different metals: *twain* (cognate with *two*) is, in older English, used (1) predicatively, (2) when it follows the noun (as here), and (3) as a noun.

111. **amain**, with force: *a* is here the usual adverbial prefix (see note l. 27); *main* = strength or force, as in the phrase 'with might and main.' The adjective *main*, = principal, is only indirectly connected with it, being from Lat. *magnus*, great. 'Ope' for 'open' is found in poetry, both as verb and adjective.

112. **mitred locks**, locks crowned with a bishop's head-dress, St. Peter being regarded as the first bishop of the Church.

stern bespake, said with indignation. Milton sometimes used the verb *bespeak* as a transitive verb = to address (a person);

in modern English both these senses are obsolete and it now denotes 'to *speak for*,' 'to engage beforehand.'

113. Here for the second time the poem rises far above the ordinary pastoral strain and Milton puts into the mouth of St. Peter his first explicit declaration of his sympathy with the Puritans in their opposition to the attempt of Archbishop Laud to introduce changes in the ritual of the English and Scottish Churches, an attempt which hastened the downfall of Charles I. and Laud himself: see notes on *Son.* xii a., xv., xvi. As early as 1584, Spenser had also written in vehement strain against the corruptions of the Church, and there is a faint echo of Spenser's language here and there throughout Milton's indignant lines. (See *Analysis*).

spared for thee, etc., *i.e.* given up, *in return for* you, an ample number of the corrupt clergy.

114. **Enow**: here used as in Early English to denote a number; it is also spelt *anow*, and in Chaucer *ynowe*, and is the plural of *enough*. It still occurs as a provincialism in England.

such as: see *L'Alleg.* 29.

for their bellies' sake: comp. *Son.* xvi. 14, where the reference is to the Presbyterian clergy; here he means the Episcopalian ministers.

115. The Church is a sheepfold into which the "hireling wolves" (see *Son.* xvi. 14), *i.e.* the corrupt clergy, intrude themselves; their only care being to share the endowments of the Church. One of Milton's pamphlets was entitled *The likeliest Means to remove Hirelings out of the Church.* Comp. *Par. Lost*, iv. 192, and *John*, x. 12.

116. "They make little reckoning of any care other than," etc.

117. **scramble**: this word, and 'shove' in the next line, express the eager and rude striving for those church endowments that are here called 'the shearers' feast.' The 'worthy bidden guest' denotes the conscientious and faithful clergy.

119. **Blind mouths**! a figure of speech into which Milton condenses the greatest contempt. 'Mouths' is put by synecdoche for 'gluttons,' and 'blind' is therefore quite applicable. They are blind guides "whose Gospel is their maw" (*Son.* xvi. 14). By saying that they scarcely know how to hold a sheep-hook or crook (which is the symbol of the shepherd's task) the poet signifies their unfitness for 'the faithful herdman's art,' *i.e.* for pastoral duty.

120. **the least**, may be regarded as an adverbial phrase modifying 'belongs,'=in the least; or it may be attributive to 'aught.'

121. **herdman**: this spelling, which occurs in the Bible, is not now in use, nor is it that of Milton's manuscript; he wrote 'herdsman,' which is current in the restricted sense of 'one who herds *cattle*.' Milton applies it to a shepherd, the word being then used generally.

122. **What recks it them?** = what does it reck them? = what do they care? Here we have an old impersonal use of the verb 'to reck,' which still survives in the adjective *reckless*.

They are sped, they have sped = they have gained their object. For the use of the auxiliary 'are' instead of 'have,' see note on l. 97. One of the early meanings of *speed* is 'success,' and *to speed* is to be successful (as in this line): comp. *Par. Lost*, x. 39. It occurs in older English both of good and ill success, and also in the sense of 'to assist' (Shakespeare has 'God speed the Parliament'), 'to send away quickly,' 'to destroy,' etc.

123. **when they list**, when it pleases them. The verb *list* is, in older English, generally used impersonally, and in Chaucer we find 'if thee lust' or 'if thee list' = if it please thee. It is derived from A.S. *lust*, pleasure, and survives in the adjective *listless*, of which the older form was *lustless*. The noun *lust* has lost the meaning it had in A.S. and still has in German, and now signifies 'longing desire.'

lean and flashy songs: pastoral language for 'their teaching, which is without substance or nourishment to their hearers.' 'Flashy' = showy but worthless: comp. Dryden, "*flashy* wit"; and Bacon, "distilled books are ... *flashy* things."

124. **Grate**, etc.: 'sound harshly on their weak and wretched oaten pipes'—a description in pastoral language of the preaching of the careless clergy. 'Grate' and 'scrannel' are here skilfully chosen to express contempt. 'Grate': the nominative of this verb is 'songs,' the sense being intermediate between the active form 'they grate their songs,' and the passive, 'their songs are grated.' Hence some would regard this as a middle voice. In Latin and Greek the passive voice arose from the middle or reflective verb. Comp. *Il. Pens.* 161.

scrannel, not found in English dictionaries, being a provincialism = 'lean': the harsh sound of the word also suits the passage. Comp. Virgil's *Ecl.* iii. 26.

125. **The hungry sheep**, the neglected congregations. Compare Milton's *Epitaph Damon*.—

> "Nor please me more my flocks; they, slighted, turn
> Their unavailing looks on me, and mourn."
>
> *Cowper's Translation.*

126. **swoln with wind**, etc., with minds filled with unsound and unwholesome teaching.

rank = coarse, foul: 'draw' = inhale, *e.g.* to *draw* breath: comp. *Par. Lost*, viii. 284, "From where I first *drew* air." The Lat. *haurio* has the same sense.

127. **Rot inwardly**, etc., have their hearts corrupted, and disseminate false doctrines.

128. **Besides.** The meaning is: "While all this injury to the Church is taking place, there is another source of loss to which the English clergy seem to be indifferent, viz. the desertions to the Church of Rome that are so frequent."

the grim wolf, the Church of Rome: comp. *Matt.* vii. 16, "Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves." Also *Acts*, xx. 29, "Grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock." 'Privy' = secret. 'Apace' = rapidly, at a great *pace*: comp. notes on *amain*, *a-field*.

129. **and nothing said.** Milton may here refer to Archbishop Laud's leaning towards Popery. Grammatically, there would seem to be a confusion here between two constructions: (1) 'and nothing (is) said,' and (2) 'nothing (being) said.' The latter would be the absolute construction, and in Shakespeare it sometimes happens that a noun intended to be used absolutely is diverted, by a change of thought, into a subject; the opposite process may have taken place here.

130. **two-handed engine.** The sense is, "But the instrument of retribution is ready and punishment will swiftly fall upon the corrupt Church." 'Engine' = instrument, its literal sense being 'something skilful' (Lat. *ingenium*, skill): it is therefore cognate with *ingenious*, *ingenuity*, and has been corrupted into *gin* = a snare. Comp. *Par. Lost*, i. 749, "Nor did he 'scape by all his *engines*' (*i.e.* schemes).

'Two-handed' is applied to swords, axes, etc., that require to be wielded with both hands. The nature of the instrument that is here called a 'two-handed engine' has been much discussed; the various interpretations are:—

(1) That it denotes the axe by which Laud was afterwards to be beheaded in 1645, Milton's words being thus prophetic. This view may be set aside: it certainly did not occur to any one at the time of the publication of *Lycidas*, when the power of Laud was at its height.

(2) That the axe is that alluded to metaphorically in the Scriptures as the instrument of reformation: see *St. Matt.* iii. 10, "And now the axe is laid to the root of the tree; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down." In Milton's treatise *Of Reformation in England* he speaks of "the axe of God's reformation hewing at the old and hollow trunk of Papacy." This view is both the most obvious and the most probable.

(3) That there is an allusion to the "two-edged sword" which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Living One (see *Rev.* i. 16).
(4) That the poet refers to the powers of the pure Gospel as contained in the Old and New Testaments.
(5) That the English Parliament with its two Houses is meant, "the agency by which, three or four years afterwards, the doors of the Church of England *were* dashed in."
(6) That it denotes *civil* and *ecclesiastical* power. See note on *Son.* xvii. 12.

132. The poet again descends to the level of the ordinary pastoral, though it should be observed that in lines 113-131 he has skilfully adapted pastoral language to an unusual theme. The "dread voice" is the voice of St. Peter, and it is to this passage that Milton refers in the sub-title to the poem prefixed on its republication in 1645. "In 1638 it had been bold enough to let the passage stand in the poem, as published in the Cambridge memorial volume, without calling attention to it in the title" (Masson).

Alpheus: see *Arc.* 30, note.

133. **That shrunk thy streams**, *i.e.* which silenced my pastoral muse. The figure is a Scriptural one: "The waters stood above the mountains; at thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away," *Psalm*, civ. 7. 'Shrunk' is here used in an active or causal sense = made to shrink, as in the phrase 'to shrink cloth.'

Sicilian Muse, the muse of pastoral poetry: see note on l. 85.

134. **hither cast**, *i.e.* come hither and cast. Compare the Lat. idiom, *se in silvas abdiderunt*, "they hid themselves *into* the woods," *i.e.* "they went into the woods and hid there," *Ovid.* See also l. 139.

135. **bells**, bell-shaped blossoms. Plants with bell-shaped flowers are technically called 'campanulate' (Ital. *campana*, a bell).

flowerets: 'floweret' is diminutive of 'flower.'

136. **use**, dwell, frequent. The verb is quite obsolete in this sense: comp. note, l. 67. In Spenser we find, "In these strange ways, where never foot did *use*."

137. The construction is, "Where the mild whispers of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks, dwell."

138. **lap**; by a common figure we speak of 'the lap of earth,' 'the earth's bosom,' etc.: comp. Gray's *Elegy*, "Here rests his head upon the *lap* of earth"; also *Rich. II.* v. 2, "the green *lap* of the new-come spring." The word has no connection with 'lap' = wrap (*L'Alleg.* 136).

the swart star sparely looks, *i.e.* "where the influence of the burning dog-star is scarcely felt," the flowers being therefore fresh and bright. The swart star is Sirius or Canicula, a star just in the mouth of the constellation Canis, hence called the dog-star (Lat. *canis*, a dog). Hence also the term "dog days." To the Greeks and Romans this star appeared at the hottest time of the year, and was by them regarded as the cause of the great heat. It is therefore here called 'swart,' *i.e.* swart-making, because by exposure to heat the face becomes *swarthy* or brown. Milton frequently transfers an epithet from the object of an action to the agent: comp. "oblivious pool" = pool that makes one oblivious (*Par. Lost*, i. 266), "forgetful lake," etc. There are four forms of the adjective: the earliest is *swart*, then *swarty*, *swarth*, and finally *swarthy*: all four forms occur in Shakespeare.

For the technical sense of 'looks,' comp. *Arc.* 52. It may be noted that in *Epit. Damon.* Milton speaks of the evil influence of the planet Saturn upon the fortunes of shepherds.

139. **quaint enamelled eyes**, *i.e.* blossoms neat and bright. The centre of a blossom is sometimes called an 'eye'; the name is also given to a tender bud or even to a flower (as here). Milton's use of the word 'enamelled' is illustrated in *Arc.* 84, and his use of 'quaint' in *Arc.* 47; see notes. Comp. Peele's *David and Bethsabe*: "May that sweet plain ... be still *enamelled* with discoloured (*i.e.* variegated) flowers."

140. **honeyed showers**, sweet and refreshing rain. 'Honeyed' is here used figuratively; comp. "honeyed words"=flattery. It is sometimes, but less correctly, spelt 'honied': comp. *Il Pens.* 142.

141. **purple**, here used as a verb. The meaning is that the spring flowers are so abundant that they give the green turf a purple tint: comp. *Par. Lost*, vii. 28, "When morn *purples* the east." In Latin *purpureus* is common in the sense of 'dazzling.'

vernal, pertaining to Spring (Lat. *ver*).

142. Lines 142-151 form (as Masson says) "the most exquisite flower-and-colour passage in all Milton's poetry. His manuscript shows that he brought it to perfection by additions and after thoughts." "For musical sweetness and dainty richness of floral colour, it beats perhaps anything else in all Milton. It is the call upon all valleys of the landscape, and the banks of all the secret streamlets, to yield up their choicest flowers, and those dearest to shepherds that they may be strewn over the dead body of Lycidas." A similar fancy is found in Shakespeare: "With fairest flowers ... I 'll sweeten thy sad grave." *Cymb.* iv. 2.

Those critics who judge the beauty of any poetical reference to nature by its fidelity to actual fact may readily object that

Milton would here bring together flowers that are never found in bloom at the same time of the year. But the season of the year does not enter into Milton's thoughts except in so far as it enables him to characterize some of the flowers. His only concern is to honour the grave of his fellow-shepherd by heaping upon it a rich offering of nature's fairest and sweetest flowers—flowers that, by their purity or their "sad embroidery," are well fitted to "strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies."

In connection with this passage Mr. Ruskin writes:—"In Milton it happens, I think, generally, and in the case before us most certainly, that the imagination is mixed and broken with fancy, and so the strength of the imagery is part of iron and part of clay." Lines 142, 145, and 147 he considers 'imaginative'; lines 144 and 146 'fanciful'; line 143 'nugatory'; and line 148 'mixed.'

rathe, early: the root of this word survives in the comparative *rather*: comp. "The *rather* lambs be starved with cold" (*Spenser*), where *rather* is an adjective. Tennyson has: "the men of *rathe* and riper years" (*In Mem.* cx.). *Rather* is now used only as an adverb, except perhaps in the phrase 'I had rather'; in 'I would rather' it is certainly an adverb. The Old English *rath*=early (adj.); *rathe*=soon (adv.).

that forsaken dies, *i.e.* 'that dies because it is forsaken by the sun-light,' a reference to the fact that it is often found in shady places. Milton at first wrote 'unwedded,' showing that he had in mind Shakespeare's words, "Pale primroses that die *unmarried*, ere they can behold Bright Phoebus (*i.e.* the sun) in his strength": *Winter's Tale* iv. 4. See *Song on M. M.* 4.

143. **tufted crow-toe.** This plant is more commonly called "crow-foot," both names having reference to the shape of the flower: comp. '*bird's foot* trefoil,' belonging to the same order of plants. Another similar plant is the *tufted* vetch, and this epithet correctly describes the appearance of all these plants when in flower.

pale jessamine. 'Jessamine' or jasmine, a plant which belongs originally to the East; hence the name, from Persian *yásmín*.

144. **pink,** a flower which has given name to a particular colour; similarly the colour called 'violet' receives its name from the flower, and 'mauve' is the colour of the 'mallow.' The reverse process is seen in 'carnation,' this flower having received its name from its *fleshy* colour (Lat. *caro*, flesh). Some varieties of the pink are white.

pansy freaked with jet, a species of violet having generally dark spots in the centre of its blossoms. 'Freaked'=spotted or marked; this word is now little used except in the

diminutive *freckles*=small dark spots (as those on some faces). Shakespeare speaks of the 'freckled cowslip.'

146. **well-attired woodbine**, *i.e.* the honey-suckle with its clusters of flowers. 'Well-attired' does not here mean well-clothed or covered with leaves, but 'having a beautiful *head-dress* of flowers.' 'Tire' (the prefix being dropped) occurs in the same sense. The word is now extended to the whole dress: comp. *On Time*, 21.

147. **hang the pensive head**: 'pensive' is here used proleptically, *i.e.* it denotes the result of the action expressed by the verb 'hang': comp. *Arc.* 87.

148. **sad embroidery**; or, as Milton originally wrote, "sorrow's livery," *i.e.* colours suited to mourning. 'To embroider' is strictly to adorn with needlework, hence used in the sense of 'to ornament,' and finally 'to diversify by different colours.'

149. **amaranthus**, a plant so called because its flowers last long without withering. In *Par. Lost* it occurs as 'amarant,' the adjective being 'amarantine,' which comes directly from the Greek *amarantos*, unfading. The word is cognate with 'ambrosia,' the food of the gods, both having their counterpart in the Sanskrit *amrita*, immortal.

his beauty shed: 'his' here stands for 'its': see note on *Il Pens.* 128. 'Shed' is the infinitive after 'bid'; so is 'fill' in the next line.

150. **daffadillies**, more commonly written 'daffodils.' There is also a more colloquial form, *daffadown-dilly*, which occurs in Spenser. Comp. *Par. Lost*, ix. 1040, "Pansies and violets and *asphodel*." 'Daffodil' and 'asphodel' are the same, both name and thing: the initial *d* is no part of the word, and in earlier English it was written *affodille*, which is from an old French word *asphodile*, which again is from the Greek *asphodelos*, a flower of the lily tribe. The dew-drops resting in the hollow of the lilies are here spoken of as tears shed for Lycidas.

151. **laureate hearse**, the poet's tomb. The word 'laureate' here signifies that Lycidas was a poet and was lamented by poets. Another interpretation is that it refers to the fact that King had obtained an academical degree: see note on *Son.* xvi. 9. 'Hearse' now denotes the carriage in which the dead are carried to the grave, and even the meaning which Milton here gives it is not the primary one. The changes of meaning which this word has shown are: (1) a harrow, *i.e.* a frame of wood fitted with spikes, and used for breaking up the soil; (2) a frame of similar shape in which lighted candles were stuck during church service; (3) a frame for lights at a funeral; (4) a funeral ceremony, a monument, etc.; (5) a frame on which a dead body

is laid; (6) a carriage for a dead body; comp. *Epitaph on M. of W.* 58. 'Lycid'=Lycidas, the suffix being dropped.

152. The sense is: 'Let us thus, in order to comfort ourselves for a little, please our weak fancies by imagining that we actually have the corpse of Lycidas to strew with flowers, even while, alas! his bones are being drifted about by the waves.'

Some editions read a comma after 'for,' and connect 'so' with 'to interpose': it seems better to read 'so' with 'for,' thus making 'to interpose,' etc., a clause of purpose.

154. There is a zeugma in *wash* as applied to 'shores' and 'seas.' Comp. Virgil's *Æn.* vi. 362: "my body is sometimes *tossed* by the waves, and sometimes *thrown* on the shore." The pathetic allusions in *Lycidas* to King's death at sea may be compared throughout with Virgil's language on the death of the pilot Palinurus, especially in the closing lines of Book v.:

> "O nimium caelo et pelago confise sereno,
> Nudus in ignota, Palinure, jacebis harena."

156. **Hebrides**, or Western Isles, a range of about 200 islands, scattered along the western coast of Scotland. King having been wrecked in the Irish Sea, his body may (according to Milton) have been carried far north to the Hebrides or far south to the coast of Cornwall, these two parts being the extremities of Great Britain.

157. **whelming**: the compound 'overwhelming' is more commonly used.

158. **the bottom of the monstrous world**, *i.e.* the bottom of the sea, "there being more room for the marvellous among the creatures of the deep than among the better known inhabitants of the land." 'Monstrous' is therefore here used literally = full of monsters. Comp. *Par. Lost*, ii. 624, "Nature breeds, Perverse, all *monstrous*, all prodigious things"; also Virgil's *Aen.* 729, "Quae marmores fert *monstra* sub aequora pontus."

159. **Or whether.** This would naturally answer to 'whether' in line 156, but there is another anacolouthon, or change of construction; the first 'whether' introduces an adverbial phrase, while the second introduces a complete sentence.

to our moist vows denied, *i.e.* your body being denied to our tearful prayers. 'Moist' is properly applicable to the eyes of those praying for the recovery of Lycidas' body. There may be an allusion in 'vows' to those promises of thanksgiving and offerings made to Neptune that he might restore the bodies of those who had been drowned. Comp. *Arc.* 6.

160. **fable of Bellerus old**, *i.e.* the fabled abode of the old Cornish giant Bellerus. Bellerium was the Latin name for Land's End in Cornwall, and Milton 'fables' this name to have

been derived from Bellerus, though no such name occurs in the catalogue of the old Cornish giants. There was, however, a giant named Corineus, said to have come into Britain with Brute, and in his first draft of the poem Milton wrote 'Corineus,' not 'Bellerus' (pron. *Bellĕrus*).

161. **great Vision of the guarded mount.** The 'guarded mount' is St. Michael's Mount, near Land's End, on which there is a crag called St. Michael's Chair. The tradition is that the 'vision' (or apparition) of the Archangel had been seen seated on this crag. Milton, therefore, speaks of the Mount as 'guarded' by the Archangel.

162. **Looks toward Namancos,** etc. Namancos is in the province of Gallicia, near Cape Finisterre, in Spain (the name being found in old maps). Bayona is also in Gallicia. "It was a boast of the Cornish people that there was a direct line of sea-view from Land's End passing France altogether and hitting no European land till it reached Spain" (see map of Europe).

hold = stronghold, castle.

163. **Angel,** *i.e.* St. Michael, who is here asked to cease looking towards Spain and to turn his gaze to the seas around him, where the shipwrecked Lycidas lies. Some would take 'Angel' as addressed to Lycidas, who would then be regarded as a glorified spirit looking down upon his weeping friends: that this is not the meaning is evident from the language of l. 164.

ruth, pity: see note, *Son.* ix. 8.

164. **dolphins,** sea-animals; here alluded to because Arion, an ancient Greek bard, when thrown overboard by sailors on a voyage to Corinth, was supported on the backs of dolphins whom he had charmed by his music.

waft, a word generally applied to winds, sometimes also to water, is here used of the dolphins to signify their swift passage through the sea. For 'hapless,' see *Epit. on M. of W.* 31, note.

165. The poem here becomes a strain of joy (see *Analysis*), which may be compared with that which closes Milton's other famous elegy on the death of Charles Diodati two years after *Lycidas* was composed. The following extract from the latter (Cowper's translation) will partly enable the student to compare the two pieces—

> "*Cease then my tears to flow!*
> Away with grief, on Damon ill bestowed!
> Who, pure himself, *has found a pure abode,*
> Has passed the showery arch, henceforth *resides*
> *With saints and heroes,* and from flowing tides
> Quaffs copious *immortality and joy.* . . .
> Thy brows encircled with a radiant band,
> And the green palm-branch waving in thy hand,

Thou in *immortal nuptials* shalt rejoice,
And *join with seraphs thy according voice,*
Where rapture reigns, and the ecstatic lyre
Guides the blest orgies of the blazing quire."

woful, also spelt 'woeful.'

166. **your sorrow,** object of your sorrow; by synecdoche the name of a passion or emotion is often put for the object that inspires it, *e.g.* joy, pride, delight, care, hope, etc.

is not dead, *i.e.* he lives in Paradise.

167. **watery floor,** the surface of the sea: comp. "level brine," l. 98, and the Lat. *aequor* (a level surface) applied to the sea. Shakespeare calls the sky the "*floor* of heaven."

168. **day-star,** the sun, which, to one looking seaward, seems to sink, at setting, into the ocean. Comp. *Com.* 95—

"And the gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream."

169. **anon,** after a short time, *i.e.* at sunrise. Comp. *L'Alleg.* 131.

repairs his drooping head, renews his brightness.

170. **tricks**; here used transitively in the sense of 'to display': see *Il Pens.* 123, note.

new-spangled ore, bright golden rays. 'Ore' = metal, the newly-risen sun being like a ball or disc of gold. 'Spangled' = sparkling: a spangle is strictly a small plate of shining metal used as an ornament, and hence in poetry it is common to speak of the stars as spangles, and of the sky as 'spangled with stars.' Comp. Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew,* iv. 5.: see also *Par. Lost,* xi. 128.

172. **So.** The meaning is, '*As* the sun sinks into the sea in the evening but rises again in the morning with renewed beauty, *so* Lycidas sank low into the sea, but rose again through the saving power of Christ, to take his place in Paradise.

'Sunk' = sank: see l. 102, note.

173. **the dear might of Him,** etc. = the power of that dear Saviour over whom the waves of the sea had no power. Milton thus appropriately illustrates Christ's power by a reference to that one of his miracles which shows his rule over the waters. See *Matt.* xiv. 22.

'Walked': here used transitively; comp. *Il Pens.* 156.

174. **Where,** *i.e.* 'mounted high (to that place) *where,*' etc.

along, a preposition governing 'groves' and 'streams.'

175. His locks that were wet with the sea ooze he washes with the pure nectar of heaven.

'Oozy,' slimy; 'ooze' is the soft mud found at the bottom of the sea. 'To ooze' is to flow gently, as ooze would do.

'Nectar,' the drink of the gods: in *Death of a Fair Infant*, Milton speaks of the "nectared head" of a goddess, and in *Par. Lost*, he tells us that there is a "nectarous humour" in the veins of the angels.

176. **unexpressive nuptial song**, *i.e.* inexpressible marriage song: see *Rev.* xix. 9, where all true believers are spoken of as bidden to the marriage feast of the Lamb of God. In the two preceding lines the language of *Lycidas* is that of classical mythology; in this line and the six following, the imagery is Christian; and then the poet reverts to mythology. "We might say that these things are ill-fitted to each other. So they would be, were not the art so fine and the poetry so overmastering; were they not fused together by genius into a whole so that the unfitness itself becomes fascination." (*Brooke.*)

'Unexpressive': both Shakespeare and Milton use adjectives with the termination *-ive* where we now use *-ible* or *-able*. Comp. incomprehensive, plausive, insuppressive, etc., occurring in Shakespeare. For the prefix *-un* see note on l. 64 above. The word 'unexpressive' has therefore, in modern English, become *in-express-ible*. 'Nuptial' is from Lat. *nubere*, to marry; comp. 'connubial.'

177. For the order of the words comp. *L'Alleg.* 40.

kingdoms meek, abodes of the meek.

178. 'There all the saints above entertain him.'

179. **sweet societies.** What Milton here calls 'sweet societies' of angels, he calls (in *Par. Lost*, xi. 80) 'fellowships of joy.' Milton believed in a complete angelic system, with a most elaborate division into orders and degrees of rank—a system widely recognised in mediæval Christian tradition. In *Par. Lost* he makes large use of this belief; in this poem it is merely hinted at.

181. The language of this line is taken from the Scriptures: see *Isaiah*, xxv. 8, and *Rev.* vii. 7, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

for ever, once and for all.

182. This line is to be compared with line 165.

183. **the Genius of the shore**: see *Arc.* 25, 26; *Il Pens.* 154. It is common in Latin poetry to represent a drowned person as becoming the genius or guardian spirit of the locality where he met his fate, his office being to prevent future voyagers from a like disaster; hence Milton says, "(thou) shalt be good (*i.e.* propitious) to all that wander," etc. The Latin *bonus* occurs in the sense of 'propitious,' Virgil's *Ecl.* v. 64.

184. **In thy large recompense,** *i.e.* as a great recompense *to thee.* "The use of the possessive pronouns and of the inflected possessive case of nouns and pronouns was, until a comparatively recent period, very much more extensive than at present, and they were employed in many cases where the preposition with the objective now takes its place" (*Marsh*).

185. **wander in that perilous flood,** *i.e.* sail over that dangerous sea.

186. The epilogue begins here (see analysis): its separateness from the rest of the poem is indicated by the fact that in it Milton lays aside his "oaten flute" and resumes his own personality, and by the metrical and rhyming structure of the eight lines of which it consists. It is, in fact, a stanza in *Ottava Rima*, the arrangement of rhymes being *abababcc*.

uncouth: see note, *L'Alleg.* 5.

187. **with sandals grey,** *i.e.* at the grey dawn. Comp. "grey-hooded even," *Com.* 188. The shepherd had begun to sing at daybreak, but in his eagerness he had continued till evening.

188. **He touched the tender stops of various quills,** *i.e.* throughout his song he had passed through various moods and had sung in various metres. 'Quill' is here used in its primary sense, = a reed, which Milton has already called 'oaten pipe': the application of this word to the feather of a bird is secondary. The 'stops' of a reed or flute are the small holes over which the fingers of the player are placed, also called vent-holes or (as in Shakespeare) 'ventages': comp. *Com.* 345, "pastoral reed with oaten stops." The epithet 'tender' is here transferred from the music itself to the stops, from the effect to the cause.

189. **thought,** care: comp. *Matt.* vi. 25, "Take no *thought* for your life," etc.

Doric lay, pastoral song, so called because Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus wrote their pastorals in the Doric dialect of the Greek tongue: see note on *L'Alleg.* 136.

190. 'The sun, being low, had lengthened *the shadows* of the hills.' Comp. Virgil, *Ecl.* i. 83.

191. **was dropt,** had dropt: see note, l. 97, and *Son.* ii. 6.

192. **twitched,** plucked tightly around him.

his mantle blue. The colour is that of a shepherd's dress, hence the allusion. It is very improbable that any allegorical sense is intended.

193. **To-morrow,** etc.: comp. the *Purple Island,* by Fletcher—

> "Home, then, my lambs: the falling drops eschew:
> To-morrow shall ye feast in pastures new."

SONNETS.

Milton's sonnets are of interest not merely from the circumstances of their composition and from the subjects of which they treat, but also from the fact that they are, in metrical structure, closer to the Italian type than those of any other English poet. The sonnet came to us originally from Italy, and hence Milton speaks of it as the Petrarchian stanza. It is a poem of fourteen decasyllabic lines, the first eight forming the octave, and the remaining six the sestet. The octave consists of two quatrains, and has its rhymes arranged thus—*a b b a, a b b a*. In the strict Italian type, a pause or break in the thought occurs at the end of the octave, but this rule is often disregarded by Milton. The rhymes of the sestet are less strictly governed by rule, and the first three forms employed by Milton (see subjoined metrical table) are all common in the sonnets of Petrarch, Dante, Tasso, and Vittoria Colonna. Ariosto chiefly follows what is here called Milton's first form. In the Italian sonnet a final rhyming couplet was not allowed, and Milton uses it only once (*Son.* xvi.): in Spenser and Shakespeare, on the other hand, this rhyming couplet is always present. The sonnet must be absolutely complete in itself and must be dignified and full of strength. It must be the direct expression of some *real* emotion, of some incident that has stirred the poet's soul. Judged by these requirements Milton's sonnets are seen to be worthy of the form in which they are cast; they are not fanciful expressions of some simulated feeling, but are straightforward, majestic and impassioned. Wordsworth might well say of the Sonnet that, in Milton's hands, "the thing became a trumpet, whence he blew soul-animating strains,—alas! too few!"

Metrical Analysis.

1st form: a b b a, a b b a; c d c, d c d :—
Sonnets i., viii., xi., xiv., xviii., xxii., xxiii.
2nd form: a b b a, a b b a; c d e, c d e :—
Sonnets ix., x., xvii., xix., xxi.
3rd form: a b b a, a b b a; c d e, d c e :—
Sonnets ii., xiii.
4th form: a b b a, a b b a; c d d, c d c :—
Sonnets xii., xv.
5th form: a b b a, a b b a; c d c, e e d :—
Sonnet xx.
6th form: a b b a, a b b a; c d d, c e e :—
Sonnet xvi.
7th form: a b b a, a b b a; c d e, d e c; c f f, f g g :—
(*tailed*) Sonnet xii*a*.

The Italian sonnets (iii.-vii.) are, of course, omitted from this edition. As a guide to the student we give a classification of the sonnets according to the nature of their subject (see Stopford Brooke's *Milton*, Classical Writers series) :—

I. *Personal :* i., ii., viii., xiii., xix., xx., xxi., xxii.
II. *To women :* iv., x., xiv., xxiii.
III. *Controversial :* xi., xii., xiia.
IV. *Political :* xv., xvi., xvii., xviii.

Sonnet I.

The title is printed in brackets in the text, because it is not found in either of the two editions (1645 and 1673), superintended by Milton himself : comp. also *Son.* ii., ix., xix., xx., xxi., xxii., xxiii. There is no means of dating this sonnet precisely, but it is placed first by Milton himself, and must be referred either to the close of the Cambridge period or to the beginning of the Horton period (*i.e.* about 1631). It shows that Milton had, even in his first efforts at sonnet-writing, resolved to adhere to Italian metrical models.

1. **O, nightingale.** Milton's fondness for this bird shows itself in *Il Pens.* 61-64, *Comus*, 234, 566, and elsewhere. It arrives in England about the middle of April. Poets generally (as here) refer to it by the feminine gender, perhaps on account of the story of Philomela (see *Il Pens.* 61), but it is the male that is the song-bird : he sings on till the young are hatched in the month of June.

yon bloomy spray. For 'yon' see note, *Il Pens.* 52. 'Bloomy' strictly denotes 'blooming,' *i.e.* covered with blossom, but if it is objected that the trees are not in blossom in April, it may be interpreted to mean 'covered with buds,' *i.e.* about to burst into blossom. For the termination *y* (=A.S. *ig*), comp. 'massy,' *Il Pens.* 158. 'Spray'=sprig (which is radically the same word), implies the breaking up of a branch into a number of twigs, just as 'twig' itself (from the same root as *two*) implies a small shoot branching off from a larger one.

2. **Warblest**, art accustomed to warble. The present here denotes not what is actually taking place, but what frequently takes place.

when all the woods are still, when all the other songsters have ceased : comp. *Il Pens.* 61.

3. **fresh hope**, *i.e.* renewed hope.

4. **the jolly hours lead**, etc., *i.e.* 'while the bright hours herald the approach of the happy month of May.' The Horae (or Hours) of classical mythology were regarded as the goddesses

of the Seasons, whose course was described as the dance of the Horae. The Hora of Spring accompanied Persephone every year on her ascent from the lower world, and the expression "The chamber of the Horae opens" is equivalent to "The Spring is coming." The attributes of Spring—flowers, fragrance, and the bloom of youth—are accordingly transferred to the Horae.

'Jolly'; the original sense is 'festive,' and this would suit the sense here; in *Com.* 986, Milton calls the Hours 'rosy-bosomed.' In Chaucer, Spenser and others, 'jolly' is used in the sense of the French *joli*, = pleasing, pretty; in modern English it means merry, and implies boisterous mirth.

propitious May. May is here called propitious (*i.e.* favourable) because it was regarded as favourable to love, "whose month is ever May," *L. L. L.* iv. 3. The literal sense of 'propitious' is 'flying forward,' a meaning which points back to the time when the Romans judged omens to be good or bad according to the flight of birds.

5. **liquid**, smooth-flowing, sweet. 'Notes' is nominative to 'portend.'

the eye of day. The song of the nightingale is so sweet that it lulls the day to sleep. Comp. *Lyc.* 26, *Com.* 978;

"Where day never shuts his eye."

6. **First heard.** This line forms a participial clause, doing duty for a temporal clause introduced by 'when.' In Latin this construction is frequent.

before the shallow cuckoo's bill, *i.e.* before the unmusical notes of the cuckoo are heard. 'Shallow' here expresses contempt, as in *Son.* xiia. 12; in the same way we speak of sounds as being *thin* or weak. 'Bill' = song; by synecdoche the source of the song is put for the song itself. The name of the bird is said to be derived from the sound made by it: comp. Lat. *cuculus*, Sansk. *kokila*, both imitative.

7. **Portend**, foretell. The nightingale and the cuckoo were regarded as rival heralds of Spring. It was a superstition that to hear the cuckoo before the nightingale betokened unhappiness for lovers.

8. **have linked**; subjunctive mood, as 'foretell,' l. 10.

amorous power, power over the affairs of lovers (Lat. *amor* = love). This is an instance of transference of attribute: 'amorous' can strictly be applied only to persons.

9. **timely sing**, sing in good time (*i.e.* be not too late as you have hitherto been). 'Timely' is now used as an adjective, here it is an adverb: comp. *Com.* 689, 970; 'timely rest' (adj.), 'timely tried' (adv.).

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bird of hate. 'Of hate' is here used passively = hated. The cuckoo is feared and hated by the smaller birds.

11. **As,** since; here introduces an explanatory clause, giving the cause of the poet's request.

too late For my relief, *i.e.* too late to be able to relieve me. An adjective preceded by the adverb *too* is often followed by a gerundial infinitive or a prepositional phrase, which is equivalent to an adverb and modifies the adjective. The prepositional phrase corresponds to the Lat. *ad* with the gerund.

12. **yet hadst,** etc.; *i.e.* yet thou hadst no reason why (thou shouldst have sung so late). The word 'yet' (= nevertheless) introduces an independent clause, and marks a contrast. 'Why,' along with the understood clause, is an attribute to 'reason.'

13. **call,** name: is here singular and in subjunctive mood. Its two objects are 'thee' and 'mate.'

his mate: the use of the pronoun *his* implies reference to the nightingale by the feminine gender, as usual; but it makes Muse masculine, which is unusual: comp. *Il Pens.* 47, *Lyc.* 19.

14. **Both them.** In modern English *both*, when used with pronouns, is treated either as an adjective or as a substantive: in the former case it follows the pronoun, *e.g. them both;* in the latter case 'of' is inserted, *e.g. both of them.* The latter use is, strictly speaking, not logical, for 'of' gives a partitive meaning, as in 'six of them,' 'a few of them': whereas in 'both of them' there is no reference to a part, but to the whole. This is avoided in Latin, where 'all of us' is 'we all' (*nos omnes*), 'how many of you were there?' is 'you how many etc.,' (*quot estis?*). When *both* is used with nouns there is greater choice of arrangement, *e.g.* 'both brothers,' 'both of the brothers,' 'both the brothers,' and even 'brothers both.'

of their train. For this use of *of*, comp. *L'Alleg.* 38, and for 'train,' see note on *Il Pens.* 10.

Sonnet II.

Milton was twenty-three years old on the 9th of December, 1631: this fixes the date of the sonnet, the last he wrote while at Cambridge. By the time he took his degree of M.A. (1632) he had given up all intention of entering the Church, and on account of this decision a friend ventured to remonstrate with him. The reply was a letter accompanied by this sonnet, which Milton described as a Petrarchian stanza: in fact, nearly seventy of Petrarch's sonnets have the same metrical structure as this has.

1. **How soon,** exclamatory, not interrogative.

subtle thief of youth. Time is so called because youth passes away imperceptibly: with this phrase compare Young's "procrastination is the *thief* of time," and Pope's "Time, the *thief* of life," etc.

2. **Stolen**: the verb is 'hath stolen,' and its object is 'year.' 'Steal' here implies that the twenty-third year had been completed, not, as some think, that it had begun.

three-and-twentieth: this is a compound ordinal numeral: in such cases it is the final member of the compound that takes the ordinal suffix; comp. 'twenty-*third*' with 'three-and-*twentieth*.'

3. **full career**: comp. the use of 'full' in the phrases 'at *full* speed,' 'in *full* swing,' etc.

4. **no bud or blossom shew'th**, *i.e.* gives no sign of inward fitness. Comp. 2 *Hen. IV.* i. 3—

> "As in an early spring
> We see the appearing *buds which to prove fruit*
> Hope gives not so much warrant as despair
> That frosts will bite them.

Here *shew'th* rhymes with *youth*: comp. *Il Pens.* 71.

5. **my semblance**, etc., *i.e.* 'perhaps my outward appearance belies the fact that I have arrived so near manhood, and maturity of mind may be much less evident in me than in some more fortunate natures.' Comp. *Par. Reg.* iii. 131.

6. **That I ... near.** 'That' here introduces a substantive clause in apposition to 'truth'; in l. 8 'that' is a relative introducing a clause attributive to 'ripeness.'

am arrived. It is more usual in modern English to say 'have arrived.' With some intransitive verbs of motion (*e.g.* to go, come, arrive, enter) either of the auxiliaries *be* and *have* is used; in Elizabethan writers both forms are common: thus 'I *am* arrived' expresses my present state, while 'I *have* arrived' expresses the activity which preceded the present state. This distinction of meaning is not now strictly observed, and the auxiliary 'have' is in general use. (See Abbott's *Shak. Gram.*)

8. **timely-happy**, fortunate with regard to time. See note, *Son.* i. 9.

endu'th=endoweth, of which it is an older spelling. It is from Fr. *endouer* (Lat. *in-dotare*), to give a gift to: cognate words are *dowry*, *endowment*. It has no connection with *indue*, which means 'to clothe with' (Lat. *in-duere*). The words are often confused.

9. **be it less or more.** In this line 'or' occurs three times, there being two pairs of alternatives—'*whether* it be less *or*

more,' and '*whether* it be soon *or* slow.' In the first case 'whether' is understood, in the second 'or' = *whether* (a cognate word).

10. **It shall be still**, etc., it shall in any case be strictly in proportion to the lot for which Heaven intends me. We have here Milton's deliberate statement of his intention to become a great poet. The word 'shall' is emphatic.

even, equal, in proportion to: an adjective.

11. **mean**, humble (Ger. *gemein*, common). The adjective mean = middle is a totally different word, being from Lat. *medius*.

12. **will of Heaven**, *sc.* 'leads me.'

13. **All is**, etc. This may mean 'all is even,' or 'all that concerns me'; 'my first consideration is to use my powers as one who is conscious that God constantly sees and judges my work.'

14. **Task-Master's eye.** This is in allusion to the parable of the labourers in the vineyard (*Matt.* xx.); in the letter which accompanied this sonnet Milton says, "Those that were latest lost nothing when the Master of the vineyard came to give every man his hire." Compare the closing lines of *Son.* xix.

Sonnets iii. to vii. are in Italian.

SONNET VIII.

The title is Milton's own. This sonnet is inspired by his high conception of the poet's task and of the power that lies in the name of a great poet to avert disaster and to requite those who honour the Muses. It was written in November, 1642. The battle of Edgehill was fought in October of that year, and the royal army then marched to attack London. This was the 'assault' expected, and Milton, having been an active pamphleteer on the side of the Parliament, might naturally have feared that his house would not escape the Royalists if they succeeded in entering the city. The 'assault' never took place, for the royal army retreated when the parliamentary army, under the Earl of Essex, moved out to meet it.

1. **Colonel** is here a trisyllable, though usually a dissyllable. It is from the Ital. *colonello*, the leader of the little *column* (*i.e.* at the head of a regiment). It has no connection with Lat. *corona*, a crown. (*Skeat.*)

Knight in Arms, a title conferred on persons of high rank as a recognition of military prowess. See Shak. *Rich. II.* i. 3.

2. **Whose chance.** This is a peculiar construction, which may

be resolved into 'whose lot it may be to seize.' It implies doubt, not that the house will be seized, but as to the particular officer that may seize it.

these defenceless doors. The word 'these' is used because the sonnet was written as if to be affixed to the door of Milton's house; it would thus be a mute appeal to the besiegers.

3. **ever,** at any time, on any occasion.

4. **him within,** etc., 'protect from injury him that is within.'

5. **He can requite thee,** *i.e.* the poet can reward you by rendering you famous "in his immortal verse." Comp. Shakespeare's *Son.* 81—

"Your monument shall be my gentle verse."

'Requite' is literally the same as 'repay,' from *re* and *quit*= freed or discharged.

charms, magic verses: comp. *Il Pens.* 83 and note.

6. **call,** 'bring down or bestow fame on such honourable acts as these,' viz. guarding the poet's house and protecting him.

8. **Whatever clime.** These words are in apposition to 'lands and seas.' 'Clime' (comp. *Com.* 977) is radically the same as 'climate,' and here used in its original sense=a region of the earth. 'Climate' has now the secondary sense of 'atmospheric conditions.'

The meaning of the line is, 'Wherever the sun shines.'

9. **the Muses' bower,** poetical language for 'the poet's house'; comp. *Lyc.* 19.

10. **Emathian conqueror,** Alexander the Great (the Sikander of Indian history), king of Macedonia, of which Emathia was a province.

bid spare: see note *Arc.* 13.

11. **house of Pindarus.** Pindar (B.C. 522-442), the greatest lyric poet of Greece, was said to have been born at Thebes; this city had been subdued by Philip of Macedonia, the father of Alexander the Great, on whose accession the Thebes attempted to recover their liberty (B.C. 336). Alexander, to punish them, destroyed the whole city with the exception of the temples and Pindar's house.

temple and tower. Some legends affirm that the temples were not destroyed.

12. **repeated air,** *i.e.* the air or chorus having been recited. The adjective here is not a mere attribute, but has the force of an adverbial clause giving the circumstances under which the event took place: 'the air had the power to save Athens, *because* it was repeated.' Comp. the Latin use of participles and of clauses with *qui* and *quippe qui* in such cases.

13. **sad Electra's poet**, Euripides (B.C. 480-406), here called "sad Electra's poet" because in one of his tragedies he deals with the history and character of Electra, the daughter of Agamemnon, and because it was a chorus from this tragedy that moved the Spartans to spare Athens. Euripides (like Homer and Ovid) was one of Milton's favourite classical authors.

The adjective 'sad' is sometimes taken as qualifying 'poet,' Euripides having been of a serious and austere disposition: such an arrangement of the words would not be allowable in modern English, though there would be no ambiguity in Latin. The more obvious reading is to refer 'sad' to Electra, who, owing to the murder of her father by her mother, often bewails her sad lot.

14. **To save**, etc. The Spartans took Athens, B.C. 404, and deliberated as to how the city should be dealt with. It was proposed by some to destroy it utterly, but a Phocian singer having recited part of a chorus from the *Electra* of Euripides while the decision was still in suspense, the hearers were so moved that they agreed it would be dishonourable to destroy a city that had given birth to such great poets.

Sonnet IX.

This sonnet, written probably in 1644, has no title in Milton's editions; and we have no certain clue to the name of the lady addressed in it.

1. **Lady, that**, etc. The relative 'that' here introduces an essential characteristic: the full nominative of address occupies the first four lines of the sonnet, the principal verb (*hast chosen*) occurring in l. 6. The relative occurs four times in this sonnet, in three cases next to its antecedent, and in one case separated from it by being placed at the end of the principal clause: the latter is a frequent arrangement in Milton; comp. *Son.* ii. 8; xi. 11.

prime. The words 'prime' and 'earliest' together emphasise the early choice made by the lady (Lat. *primus*, first). 'Earliest,' very early, the superlative being merely intensive (as often in Latin): see note, *Il Pens.* 12.

2. **the broad way and the green**, the broad and green way. This sonnet is full of Biblical imagery: comp. *Matt.* vii. 13, "*Broad* is the way that leadeth to destruction." By calling it green as well as broad, Milton signifies that the way of the sinful is not merely easy to travel, but attractive.

When two adjectives refer to one object, this arrangement of words cannot be imitated: *e.g.* 'the broad way and the green' would, in ordinary prose, imply that there were two ways, one green, the other broad.

3. **with those few**, *i.e.* in company with the few referred to in *Matt.* vii. 14, "Narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it." 'Those' is therefore used demonstratively.

art eminently seen, *i.e.* thou art conspicuous. 'Eminently' is here an essential part of the predicate; 'to be seen eminently' = 'to be seen to be eminent' (Lat. *eminens*, standing out).

4. **That labour**, etc. Comp. *Hamlet*, i. 3—

> "Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
> Show me *the steep and thorny way to heaven*,
> While, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,
> Himself the *primrose path of dalliance* treads."

5. **The better part**, etc. : *i.e.* thou hast chosen, as Mary and Ruth did, the better part, viz., devotion to God and heavenly things. The poet here likens the lady to two women mentioned in the Scriptures as having made a similar choice. Mary and Martha were two sisters, of whom the latter was troubled about wordly affairs, while the former had "chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (*Luke* x.). Similarly Ruth, the Moabitess, refused to leave her mother-in-law, saying: "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" (*Ruth*, i.).

6. **overween**, think arrogantly, think too highly of themselves. The word, though frequent in Milton, is now nearly obsolete except as a participial adjective, 'overweening' = conceited, arrogant. It is from the verb *ween*, to suppose, think; now obsolete except in the parenthetical clause 'I ween' (A.S. *wenan*, to imagine).

7. **fret their spleen**, become spiteful or ill-humoured. The old theory of "humours" placed the seat of anger and ill-humoured melancholy in the spleen, a spongy gland situated above the kidneys; hence a spiteful person is said 'to have the spleen' or 'to be splenetic.' Shakespeare uses the adjectives 'splenitive,' 'spleenful,' and 'spleeny.' So in Latin *stomachus* was used for ill-temper: comp. 'melancholy,' *L'Alleg.* 1. 'Fret,' to excite, literally 'to eat away' (A.S. *fretan*).

8. **No anger find in thee**, *i.e.* they do not excite your anger, but your pity.

pity and ruth. 'Ruth' = pity. It is not uncommon to find in poetry two nouns of the same sense thus connected by *and*: this is sometimes to give emphasis, and sometimes it points to a usage rendered necessary when the Normans settled in England. It "sprang out of the mutual necessity felt by two races of people and two classes of society to make themselves intelligible the one to the other. It is, in fact, a putting of colloquial formulae to do the duty of a French-English and an English-French vocabulary." 'Pity' is the old Fr. *pité*, from Lat. *pietas*

(from which our word *piety* is directly derived). 'Ruth,' now obsolete (except in poetry and in the adjective *ruthless* and its derivatives), is from the verb *rue*, to be sorry for (A.S. *hreówan*).

The word here rhymes with *Ruth* in l. 5, an instance of what is called an *identical* rhyme, which is not now tolerated in English poetry. Such rhymes occur occasionally in Chaucer and Spenser, and twice in Shakespeare.

'Pity' and 'ruth' are objects of the verb 'find.'

9. **Thy care is fixed**: comp. *Psalm* cxii. 7.

zealously: see note, *L'Alleg.* 6.

10. **odorous lamp.** The lady is here likened to the five wise virgins of Scripture (*Matt.* xxv.) who, unlike their foolish sisters, were careful to take oil in their vessels with their lamps when they went out to meet the Bridegroom, and so were able to gain admittance to the marriage feast. 'Odorous'=fragrant.

deeds of light, *i.e.* good deeds. Comp. *M. of Venice:* "So *shines* a good deed in a naughty world"; also *Matt.* v. 18, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works."

11. **hope**, etc. Comp. *Romans*, v. 5, "Hope maketh not ashamed."

be sure Thou, etc., *i.e.* be sure (that) thou hast gained.

12. **Bridegroom**, in allusion to the parable of the Ten Virgins (see l. 10). The word is from A.S. *bryd*, bride, and *guma*, man: the *r* in 'groom' is due to confusion with A.S. *grome*, a groom, which is a totally different word.

feastful, festive. 'Feastful,' a hybrid word, is now obsolete, being one of a large number of adjectives formed by means of the word *full* and now disused, *e.g.* charmful, despairful, excessful, etc. 'Feast' is from Lat. *festus*, joyful; there are two derived adjectives in common use—*festal* and *festive*, of which the terminations are of Latin origin.

13. **mid-hour of night**, hour of midnight.

14. **Hast gained.** The sequence of tenses here should be observed. In the dependent clause we have a *present* (*passes*), and in the principal clause a *perfect* (*hast gained*): the sense is, 'at the moment the bridegroom passes to bliss, at that very moment thy entrance is complete (*i.e.* has been gained).'

Sonnet X.

This was written in 1644 or 1645; it is the latest of the sonnets printed in the edition of 1645. Phillips, the nephew and biographer of Milton, relates that during the time the poet was

deserted by his first wife he "made it his chief diversion now and then of an evening to visit the Lady Margaret Ley. This lady, being a woman of great wit and ingenuity, had a particular honour for him, and took much delight in his company, as likewise Captain Hobson, her husband, a very accomplished gentleman." Both she and her father are in this sonnet complimented on their political views.

1. **that good Earl**: James Ley, born 1552, was made Lord High Treasurer of England in 1624, and Lord President of the Council in 1627. Both these offices are alluded to in the sonnet. "He had been removed from the High Treasurership to the less laborious office of President of the Council, ostensibly on account of his old age, but really, it was thought, because he was not sufficiently compliant with the policy of Charles and Buckingham. He died in March, 1628-9, immediately after the dissolution of Charles's Third Parliament; and, as the sonnet hints, his death was believed to have been hastened by political anxiety at that crisis" (Masson).

The construction 'Daughter *to* that good Earl' should be noticed; the preposition *of* is commonly used.

once President. 'Once' is here an adverbial adjunct to 'President,' for when a noun stands in attributive relation to another noun, it may be modified by adverbs. It is not necessary, therefore, to explain 'once' as an adverb modifying 'was' understood.

2. **her**, *i.e.* England's.

3. **in both unstained**, *i.e.* not having, in either of these offices, sullied his reputation by taking bribes. 'Fee' is from the A.S. *feoh*, cattle, property, now used of the price paid for services: see note, *Son.* xii. 7.

4. **more in himself content.** This does not mean that he resigned of his own accord, but that, "when dismissed, he went willingly": the construction is, "(being) more content in himself (than in the enjoyment of office)."

5. **sad breaking.** There is here a play upon the word 'break' applied in l. 5 to the dissolving of Parliament, and in l. 6 to the effects of this upon the old Earl. In the former sense we speak of the breaking up of an assembly, and in the latter of a person's spirits or health being broken. Milton calls the dissolution of Charles's third Parliament a sad one, because it showed that the King had entered upon that line of conduct which led to the Civil War. The demonstrative *that* implies that the Parliament referred to is too well known to need further mention: comp. l. 8.

6. **as that dishonest victory**, etc., *i.e.* in the same way as the

victory at Chaeronea broke the heart of Isocrates. The word 'dishonest' is here used in the sense of Lat. *inhonestus* = dishonourable: in the same way our word 'honesty' has not the high sense of the Lat. *honestas* = all that is honourable. Milton calls the victory dishonest because it was 'fatal to liberty': in it Philip of Macedon defeated the combined Athenian and Theban forces, B.C. 338, Greece thus losing her independence. Chaeronea was a city of Bœotia.

8. **with report.** 'With' = by means of. The use of the instrumental *with* is not now so common as in earlier English, and is never used to denote the agent. In Chaucer we find "slain *with* (= by) cursed Jews."

that old man eloquent; Isocrates, one of the most famous of Greek orators, who, at the age of ninety-nine, died four days after hearing the report of the disaster at the Chaeronea. So the good Earl of the sonnet died four days after the dissolution of Parliament.

9. **Though later born**, etc., "though I was born too late to have known your father at his best, yet, methinks, I am able from seeing you to judge what he was like." Milton does not mean that he was born after the Earl's death, for the Earl died twenty years after Milton's birth.

Than in this line is a conjunction introducing an elliptical clause depending on *later*. It is difficult to give a satisfactory syntactical explanation of such clauses: we may expand it into, 'Though I was born later than (I should have been in order) to have known': see note on *than*, *Son.* xvii. 2.

10. **by you**, through or by means of you.

11. **methinks**, it seems to me. Here *me* is the dative, and *thinks* is an impersonal verb (A.S. *thincan*, to appear), quite distinct from the verb 'I think,' which is from the A.S. *thencan*, to cause to appear. For a similar relation compare *drink* with *drench* (= to cause to drink).

yet. In this line *yet* = up to the present time; in the previous line *yet* = nevertheless.

13. **That all both judge you.** *That* here introduces a clause of consequence in adverbial relation to *well*, and co-ordinate with *so*: comp. "He spoke *so* fast *that* I could not understand."

Both in this line is strangely placed: the ordinary form would be: 'All judge you *both* to relate them (*i.e.* your father's virtues) truly, *and* to possess them.' The co-ordinate words are *relate* and *possess*; the one is preceded by *both*, the other by *and*.

Sonnet XI.

The two sonnets (xi. and xii.) and a few Greek verses are all the poetry that Milton wrote in 1645; they were probably written after the publication of the first edition of his Minor Poems in that year. These two sonnets breathe the air of controversy, into which Milton had thrown himself since 1641. His desertion by his first wife in 1643 had turned his attention to the question of Divorce, and in August of that year he published a pamphlet entitled *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce Restored.* This was followed by other three tracts, viz. *The Judgment of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce; Tetrachordon, or Expositions upon the four chief places in Scripture which treat of Marriage;* and *Colasterion: a Reply to a Nameless Answer against the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce.* Owing to these pamphlets Milton was regarded by many as the propounder of doctrines that were calculated to undermine morality and destroy the beauty of social and family life. The Presbyterian divines were especially severe on him, and from this time he was generally regarded as having gone over to the ranks of the Independents. His wife returned to him in 1645, probably before these two sonnets were written, so that he was the better able to throw ridicule upon those who had regarded him as lightly estimating the sanctity of married life.

1. **writ**, written. All verbs of the strong conjugation originally formed their past participles in *en:* owing however to a tendency (very common in Elizabethan writers) to drop the suffix, many strong verbs have now two forms of the past participle, *e.g.* chid, chidden; bid, bidden; bit, bitten; writ, written; while others have lost the form in *en* altogether, *e.g.* spit.

of late, lately: comp. the adverbial 'of old,' 'of yore,' etc.

Tetrachordon. This Greek word means 'four-stringed': applied to this pamphlet because it expounded four passages of Scripture.

2. **woven close**, etc. Here Milton characterises his own prose style, and indicates correctly its most striking features, viz. close reasoning and involved yet scholarly syntax, due largely to his use of Latin constructions. The 'matter' refers to his arguments, the 'form' to their arrangement, and the 'style' to the diction employed.

both: strictly speaking, *both ... and* should couple only two notions, but Milton sometimes uses them to join more than two: comp. "The God that made *both* sky *and* earth *and* heaven."

3. **The subject new.** This may be taken absolutely: it is equivalent to an adverbial adjunct of cause, the meaning being,

"Because the subject was novel, the book attracted readers; but when the novelty wore off, it was little read." The punctuation would, however, justify the reading, "The subject (was) new": see note, *Il Pens.* 25.

walked the town awhile, *i.e.* was circulated and read throughout London for a time. 'Awhile' = for awhile (A.S. *hwíl* = time).

4. **Numbering,** reckoning or estimating: the Lat. *numero* is sometimes used in this sense. The meaning is that the book, from the close texture of its thought and language, was a test of the reader's ability.

now seldom pored on, now seldom carefully read. In modern English we say 'to pore *over*,' and the passive form is not used. 'Pored on' rhymes with 'word on' and 'Gordon,' and line 7 ends in the middle of a word: we can only suppose that Milton takes these liberties because the sonnet is written in a jocular mood and with the intention of ridiculing his detractors. Yet Dr. Johnson afterwards quoted this piece as a representative specimen of an English sonnet!

6. **some in file,** *i.e.* some passers-by stand, one looking over another's shoulder, so long that, while they are trying to spell out the title, one could walk to Mile-End Green.

7. **false,** adverb: comp. 'close,' l. 2; and note, *L'Alleg.* 56.

Mile-End Green: "a locality in Whitechapel, about the distance which its name indicates from the central parts of the City of London, and the common terminus in Milton's time of a staid citizen's walk in that direction" (Masson).

8. **Why,** exclamatory. 'Is it harder?' is a rhetorical question meaning 'It is *not* harder to pronounce,' etc.

Gordon, Colkitto, Macdonnel, Galasp: these, which are in Milton's opinion as 'rugged' as the name of his own book, are all Scottish names, chosen because they were borne by men who had fought under the Marquis of Montrose on behalf of King Charles. George, Lord Gordon, had been slain in one of Montrose's battles; the other three names all refer to one person, viz. Alexander Macdonald, son of Colkittoch, son of Gillespie, son of Alexander, son of John Catanach. He was a powerful Highland chief, called *Colkittoch* because he was left-handed (from a Gaelic word). *Galasp* is Milton's corruption of Gillespie; there was a Scottish Presbyterian divine of this name, and the poet, as an Independent, may have meant to ridicule him as well as the Highlander.

10. **rugged.** Milton originally wrote 'barbarous,' then 'rough-hewn.'

our like mouths, *i.e.* mouths like ours. In the former

phrase 'like' is an adjective, in the latter it has the force of a preposition. The explanation is that in Latin both would be translated by the adjective *similis* = like; *e.g. similis sui* is either 'like himself' or 'his like.'

grow sleek, lose their ruggedness.

11. **made Quintilian stare.** This line forms an attributive clause to 'names': see note on *Son.* ix. 1.

The names were so uncouth that Quintilian, the most famous of Roman rhetoricians, would have been astonished if he had heard them. Quintilian (A.D. 40-118) in his *Institutes* lays great stress on the judicious choice of words as an element of style; and there is no doubt that Milton also here expresses his own dislike of the guttural sounds and other peculiarities of the Scottish tongue.

12. **like ours,** as ours does. The words form an adverbial adjunct to l. 13; "thy age did not hate learning as ours does." If the words be taken as qualifying 'age,' they must be equivalent to 'unlike ours.'

Sir John Cheek (1514-1557). He was the first Professor of Greek at Cambridge, and afterwards tutor to Edward VI.; he is here mentioned probably because he had been a member of a commission appointed by Parliament to codify church law (including the law of divorce).

13. **worse than toad or asp,** *i.e.* worse than (it hates) toad or asp. Instead of 'hate worse' we ordinarily say 'hate more.' An asp is a venomous serpent.

14. **taught'st.** The verb *to teach* takes two objects: (1) 'Cambridge and King Edward,' and (2) 'Greek.'

Sonnet XII.

This is a more indignant, and less jocular sonnet than the preceding.

1. **to quit their clogs.** 'Their' is used because it refers to the *individuals* living in the 'age' or period.

'Quit,' to give up, leave. The clogs or hindrances referred to are the restrictions upon divorce which Milton wished to see removed.

2. **By,** by means of.

the known rules, etc, *i.e.* "before divorce was restrained by ecclesiastical and other laws."

straight: see note, *Univ. Carrier,* II. 10, and *L'Alleg.* 69.

barbarous noise, *i.e.* clamour raised by vulgar and ignorant

persons. Comp. the language of *Par. Reg.* iii. 49, "And what the people but a herd confused, A miscellaneous rabble," etc.

4. **Of owls and cuckoos**, etc. Milton purposely chooses animals whose cries are unmusical. One editor thinks Milton may have seen a painting in which the Spanish poet, Lope de Vega, is represented as calmly engaged in writing while surrounded by dogs, monkeys, etc. This sonnet shows, however, that Milton had not altogether preserved his own equanimity.

5. **those hinds.** The reference is to a fable told by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses.* When Leto, called Latona by the Romans, fled from the wrath of Juno, she took in her arms her 'twin-born progeny,' Apollo and Diana: being fatigued, she attempted to drink of the water of a small lake in Lycia, but was prevented by rustics who railed at her. In her distress she prayed for help, when the rustics were immediately turned into frogs. *Hind* is from A.S. *hiwan*, domestics.

7. **after**, afterwards.

held the Sun and Moon in fee, Apollo being the god of the Sun, and Diana goddess of the Moon. Milton may here hint that he also, in spite of present detraction, hoped to make a great name for himself. 'To hold in fee' is to have absolute right. "An estate *in fee simple* is an unqualified inheritance in land unlimited in its duration as to descent." Comp. Wordsworth: "Once did she hold the gorgeous East in fee."

8. **this is got**, etc., *i.e.* this is the result of laying great thoughts before the vulgar. Comp. *Matt.* vii. 6, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine." 'Pearl' is here singular, because used generically.

9. **bawl for freedom.** Comp. Tennyson:

> "He that *roars for Liberty*
> Faster binds a tyrant's power. —*Vision of Sin.*

11. **Licence** ... **Liberty.** In his *Tetrachordon* Milton wrote, "The Exposition here alleged is neither new nor licentious, as some now would persuade the commonalty, although it be nearer truth that nothing is more new than those teachers themselves, and nothing more licentious than some known to be, whose hypocrisy yet shames not to take offence at this doctrine (*i.e. Liberty* of Divorce) for *Licence*, whereas indeed they fear it would remove licence and leave them few companions."

12. **who loves that** (*i.e.* Liberty), etc.: in *Tenure of Kings*, Milton says, "None can love freedom heartily but good men; the rest love not freedom but licence." 'Who' is the subject of 'loves,' and the first clause 'who loves that' forms the subject of the second: it is now usual in such cases to use the compound relative *whoever.* The position of *who* at the beginning of the

clause is due to the fact that it was originally used only as an interrogative pronoun.

13. **rove.** To shoot *at rovers* was to shoot without any particular aim. A 'rover' was a kind of arrow.

14. **For all this waste.** We may explain 'for' as='in spite of,' a meaning which it often has when followed by 'all.' 'All,' however, is not an adjective qualifying 'waste,' as is seen by expanding the phrase into 'For all that his waste of wealth could do.' Comp. Shakespeare, "For all he be a Roman"; and *Hymn Nat.* 73.

Sonnet XII*a*.

This is a true sonnet of 14 lines, *plus* a tail or 'coda' of six lines: both parts are constructed according to the rules strictly observed by Italian writers. The tone of the piece is Anti-Presbyterian. Parliament had resolved in 1642 that government of the Church by archbishops and bishops was inconvenient, but the ordinance for the abolition of these 'prelates' was not passed by the Commons till October, 1646. The Presbyterians in Parliament then called for the suppression of all religious sects that were not in sympathy with the Presbyterian form of Church government, and Milton, as an Independent, taunts them with being "the *new* forcers of conscience." He regarded religious intolerance as equally monstrous, whether under a Presbyterian or an Episcopalian system.

1. **Prelate Lord**, government of the Church by archbishops and bishops. A 'prelate' is strictly one placed over others (Lat. *prae*, before; *latus*, borne or brought).

2. **stiff vows**, inflexible decisions.

renounced his Liturgy, given up the Episcopal form of service. The Liturgy is the Book of Common Prayer, the reading of which was, in 1644, prohibited even in private families: severe penalties were incurred by those convicted under this law. 'Liturgy' is the Greek *leitourgia*, public service.

3. **To seize**, etc., *i.e.* in order that you might seize upon the endowments left vacant by some of the clergy. Milton was disgusted with the eagerness with which Presbyterian divines scrambled for vacant offices; it showed, as he thought, that their dislike of Episcopacy arose from envy, not abhorrence.

Plurality, the holding of more than one ecclesiastical living; one who does so is a *pluralist*. By the phrase "widowed whore" Milton refers to the Church as deprived of its prelates, and at the same time signifies that the holding of profitable

offices by the clergy was distasteful to him. Comp. *Son.* xvi. and *Lyc.* 113-118.

5. **ye**; see note, *Arc.* 40.

adjure the civil sword, *i.e.* solemnly call upon the civil power to aid you.

7. **ride**, override.

Classic Hierarchy, ecclesiastical government by *Classes*, The *Class* or *Classis* was the name given to the small Presbyterian court of each parish, and when Episcopacy was abolished, the Presbyterians wished to establish the Scottish system of a gradation of Church Courts. The Independents, on the contrary, thought that each congregation should be independent. 'Classic' is not now used in this primary sense; in '*classic* works,' 'Greek and Roman *classics*' it refers to literature of the highest class. 'Hierarchy,' sacred government (Greek *hieros*, sacred; *archein*, to rule, seen in *arch*bishop, *arch*angel, etc.).

8. **mere A. S. and Rutherford.** Adam Stewart and Samuel Rutherford, two Scottish Presbyterian pamphleteers who vigorously opposed the Independents. The former published his pamphlets under the initials A. S. Rutherford was Professor of Divinity in the University of St. Andrews, and sat in the Westminster Assembly.

'Mere' (Lat. merus=unmixed, pure). In Elizabethan writers it often occurs in the sense of 'unadulterated.' Comp. Massinger's *Virgin Martyr*: "Thou art a mere I-am-an-O, I-am-an-as."

9. **intent**: see note *Arc.* 34. Trench points out that in earlier English 'to intend' meant 'to be actually and earnestly engaged in doing,' having no reference to the future as it now has.

Milton here takes the Apostle Paul as his type of a good preacher.

11. **heretics.** No word could better illustrate Milton's meaning; it strictly denotes 'one who makes a choice,' and the poet held that every man must choose for himself what to believe. But the word has come to be applied in reproach to all who, in matters of religious belief, are in opposition to established and widely-accepted opinion. Such persons are also said to be 'heterodox,' which originally meant 'thinking differently from others'; it now means 'differing from the majority,' and hence 'unsound' or 'objectionable.'

12. **shallow Edwards**: comp. *Son.* i. 6 and *Arc.* 41: it expresses contempt. The Rev. Thomas Edwards, a London preacher, had attacked the Independents in a wretched pamphlet in which Milton is branded as a heretic for his views on divorce.

Scotch What-d'ye-call. The Scotchman here referred to is

(Prof. Masson thinks) Robert Baillie, Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow, who had in 1645 attacked Milton for his opinions on divorce. The poet signifies that the attack had made little impression on him; he cannot even remember his opponent's name. He thus consigns him to oblivion.

14. **packing**. The meaning is: The meetings of the Westminster Assembly of Divines were more unfairly constituted by the exclusion of Independents than were those of the famous Council of Trent by the exclusion of Protestants. The Council was held at Trent in Austria-Hungary from 1545 to 1563 for the purpose of taking measures against the Reformation. We speak of a 'packed' meeting, a 'packed' jury, when endeavours are made to secure undue weight for one side of a question.

15. Here follows the 'coda' of the sonnet, forming one long adverbial clause of purpose or result.

16. **with ... shears**, *i.e.* by depriving you of your powers, and thus restoring the wholesome influence of toleration. For use of 'their' see *Son.* xii. 1.

17. **Clip your phylacteries**, etc., *i.e.* check your pharisaical pretensions to superior holiness, though not inflicting upon you that physical suffering which you would fain inflict upon 'heretics.'

The phylactery among the Jews was a slip of parchment inscribed with passages of Scripture, worn on the left arm or forehead: see *Matt.* xxiii. 5.

baulk your ears, cheat your ears of their deserts by sparing them. The modern spelling is *balk*, to hinder, to cheat, used in such phrases as 'to be *balked* of one's design.' Milton hints at the fact that punishment by mutilation was not uncommon in his day: William Prynne, a Presbyterian, had had his nose and ears cut off for writing against Episcopacy and against the theatre in the time of Laud.

18. **succour our just fears**, relieve us from the fears that now, with good reason, possess us. 'Just'=justifiable. 'Succour' is here co-ordinate with 'clip.'

19. **they**, the Parliament.

in your charge, in the charge or accusation against you, when the party of toleration comes into power.

20. **New Presbyter ... old Priest.** There is a double allusion here: (1) literally, the word *priest* is merely a contraction of the Greek *presbyteros*, elder; compare such pairs of words as *diamond* and *adamant*, *fancy* and *phantasy*, *palsy* and *paralysis*, *slander* and *scandal*: (2) the new Presbyterian was characterised by the same intolerant spirit as the Episcopalian or even as

the Roman Catholic. The same allusion occurs in *Areopagitica*, written a year before this sonnet.

In *Com.* 322 and 748 Milton in a similar way connects the meaning of a word with its derivation.

writ large. Here also the two meanings appear, (1) *Presbyter* is a longer word than *Priest*, and (2) the name implied, to Milton, even greater intolerance. For 'writ' see *Son.* xi. 1.

SONNET XIII.

This first appeared as a recommendatory piece prefixed to *Choice Psalms, put into Music for Three Voices, composed by Henry and William Lawes, Brothers, and Servants to His Majestie* (1648). The title of the book shows that Henry Lawes was a Royalist, but this sonnet indicates that the poet had not allowed a difference of political opinions to weaken his friendship with the musician: a common love of music united the hearts of the two men. Moreover, the sonnet was a spontaneous tribute of regard, and had been written two years before Lawes' book was published. Lawes wrote the music of *Arcades* and *Comus*.

1. **Harry.** This familiar form of address strikes the key-note of personal affection.

tuneful and well-measured song. Lawes was remarkable for his success in setting songs to music: "He communicated to verse an original and expressive melody; he exceeded his predecessors and contemporaries in a pathos and sentiment, a simplicity and propriety, an articulation and intelligibility which so naturally adapt themselves to the words of the poet." This extract explains the allusions to Lawes' music in the sonnet, *e.g.* 'tuneful,' 'well-measured,' 'just note and accent,' 'smooth air,' etc.

2. **span,** measure.

3. **just note and accent,** the melody being suited to the words, and the accent of the music corresponding to the accent of the language.

to scan With Midas' ears, *i.e.* to mismatch the melody and the words in a stupid manner. The verb 'taught' has here, as its second object, two infinitive clauses—'how to span' and 'not to scan.' See note, *Son.* xi. 14.

'Midas' ears,' *i.e.* ass's ears, denoting want of intelligence. This is in allusion to Midas, the King of Phrygia, who had been appointed judge in a musical contest between Apollo and Pan, and decided in favour of the latter. Apollo, indignant, changed his ears into those of an ass.

4. **committing short and long**, bringing together short and long syllables (which correspond roughly to what we call unaccented and accented syllables). *Commit* has here the sense of Lat. *committere*, to match, to bring together; it never really had this sense in English. Shakespeare uses 'commit' in the sense of 'transgress,' but this is not the meaning here.

5. **exempts thee**, etc., distinguishes you above all other musicians, redeems you from mediocrity. Comp. Horace, *Ode* i. 1, *secernunt populo.* 'Exempts' is singular, although the subject is 'worth and skill': these form one idea.

6. **enough for Envy**, etc., sufficient to cause the envious to turn pale. A similar idea occurs in *Arc.* 11-13; compare also "wrinkled care," "spare Fast," etc.

7. **shalt be writ**: thy name shall be handed down to posterity as that of the man who, etc. Compare the use of *write* in the phrase "Write him down a traitor." The Lat. *scribo*, to write, occurs in this sense—

> "*Scriberis* Vario fortis et hostium
> Victor." Horace, *Carm. I.* i. 32.

8. **couldst humour**: couldst best suit your music to the English tongue. *To humour* a person is to adapt one's mood to his.

10. **priest of Phœbus' quire**, the leader of the choir of Phoebus (Apollo), the god of song and music. For 'quire,' see *Il Pens.* 162. Poets are often described as forming the choir of Apollo, Homer having been inspired by that god. 'Their,' in l. 11, refers to the poets forming his choir; Lawes having set to music short poems written by a large number of well-known authors.

11. **happiest lines**. 'Happy' = well-expressed. See *Epit. on M. of W.* 31, and comp. *Lyc.* 92.

hymn or story. The story referred to is that of *Ariadne* by Cartwright (1611-1643), set to music by Lawes.

12. **Dante ... Casella.** In his *Purgatorio*, canto ii., the poet Dante tells how, after emerging from Hell into Purgatory, he saw a vessel freighted with souls come to be purged of their sins and made fit for Paradise; among them he recognised one of his friends, Casella, a Florentine celebrated for his skill in music.

13. **wooed to sing**, pleaded with to sing. Dante asked Casella to sing some soothing air to console his spirit, and Casella complied by singing one of Dante's own songs.

14. **Met ... Purgatory.** Purgatory is called 'milder' by comparison with Hell: it was the place or state in which souls were purified or purged (Lat. *purgare*, to make *pure*). Dante tells how, on arrival at the gate of Purgatory, his forehead was

marked with seven P's (= *peccata*, sins), one of which he would lose at every stage until he reached the river which divided Purgatory from Paradise.

'Met' is a participle qualifying 'whom,' and line 14 is equivalent to a subordinate clause. This is the Latin use of the participle.

Sonnet XIV.

Nothing more is known of the lady addressed than what is supplied in the heading. It will be observed that, as in Sonnet ix. (which is also addressed to a virtuous woman), the poet makes frequent use of Scriptural phraseology. Its date is 1646.

1. **parted from thee never,** which never left you: *never* is emphatic.

2. **ripened,** brought to perfection. The verb is here used in an active sense. In *Son.* ii. 7, 'ripeness' is similarly used to denote moral growth.

to dwell with God: grammatically, denotes the extent of the action expressed by 'ripened.' Comp. *Psalm* xxiii. 6.

3. **earthy load Of death.** Human life is fleeting, and is here called a "load of death." Comp. *Rom.* vii. 24, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death"; also 1 *Cor.* xv. 49; see also note, *Il Pens.* 92.

4. **from life doth sever:** which separates us from eternal life. This mortal life is only life so-called, the future and immortal life is true existence.

5. **Thy works and alms.** Comp *Acts*, x. 4: "Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God."

The history of the word 'alms' illustrates how the form of a word may gradually come to disguise its origin. It is singular, not plural; and comes through Latin from the Greek *eleémosyné;* this became in A.S. *ælmæsse*, then *almes* (two syllables), and finally *alms*. It has thus dwindled from six syllables to one.

good endeavour, *i.e.* good deeds. In modern English it would mean well-meant or good efforts, whether successful or not. Here it means duty actually performed, being from Fr. *devoir*, duty, and the verbal prefix *en.*

6. **nor in the grave,** etc.: they were not forgotten after your death. Contrast this with the lines in Shak. *Julius Caesar*—

> "The evil that men do lives after them,
> The good is oft interred with their bones."

7. **golden rod.** Faith is here represented as pointing the way to heaven by means of a golden rod. In poetry saints are often represented as bearing wands or rods.

8. **Followed**: *i.e.* your good deeds followed you to heaven. 'For ever' is in this line an attributive adjunct to 'joy and bliss' = eternal.

9. **knew them best Thy handmaids**: knew them best to be thy handmaids = knew best that they were thy handmaids. A comparison of these two renderings will show that such verbs as 'know, 'say,' 'think' may have as their object either a substantive accompanied by an infinitive or a substantive clause. The former is a Latin idiom, and is frequent in Milton; it is not so common in English as it was: *e.g.* in Anglo-Saxon we find 'They say him live,' *i.e.* 'They say *that* he is alive.'

11. **that**, etc.: so that, having been thus beautified, they flew up to God's presence.

12. **speak**. The earlier editions read 'spake,' but the present tense implies that the good deeds of the lady *still* plead for her at the judgment-seat.

13. **thenceforth**, from that time onwards: this adverb modifies 'rest,' not 'bid.' For 'bid' used as a past, comp. *Arc.* 13.

14. **drink thy fill**, etc. Comp. *Psalm* xxxvi., "Thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures," alluding to the waters of eternal life.

Grammatically, 'thy fill' may be taken to denote the extent of the action implied by the verb: some, however, regard it as a cognate object.

Sonnet XV.

This, and Sonnets xvi., xvii., and xxii., were not published in Milton's lifetime: their references to Pre-Restoration politics did not allow of their publication in the second edition of the Minor Poems (1673). The siege of Colchester occurred during what is called the *Second Civil War*—a rising of the English and Scottish royalists on behalf of Charles I., then a prisoner in the Isle of Wight. The siege was conducted by the commander-in-chief of the Parliamentary armies, the third Lord Fairfax; and lasted more than two months (1648), during which time the inhabitants endured all the miseries of famine. Fairfax was a great general, a poet, and a man of culture, and Milton's sonnet is a tribute to his success on a particular occasion and to his high character.

1. **name in arms**, reputation as a soldier. The poet here speaks of Fairfax's European reputation as a commander in almost the same words as he speaks of his own reputation as a pamphleteer in *Son.* xxiii.

2. **Filling**. This is an example of syllepsis, the word 'filling' being applied to 'mouth' and to 'monarchs' in different senses.

3. **her**, Europe's.

amaze, amazement, consternation: an allusion to the effect that the doings of Parliament would have on the minds of other kings besides Charles.

The word 'amazement' is a hybrid, *amaze* (= in a maze) being Teutonic, and the suffix *ment* Romanic. Many words originally used both as verbs and nouns, exist only as verbs, *e.g. amaze, revile, retire*, all of which occur in Milton in both uses.

4. **daunt**; see *Il Pens.* 137.

5. **virtue**, valour: see *Il Pens.* 113, note.

ever brings victory home. "Though the credit of the parliamentary triumph has been popularly attached to the greater name of Cromwell, it was to Fairfax that it was in great measure due." (*Pattison.*)

6. **new rebellions.** This sonnet having been written during the siege of Colchester, the poet must be referring to the various outbreaks which together form the Second Civil War—in Wales, Kent, Essex, and the west of England.

7. **Their Hydra heads.** It was one of the labours of Hercules to destroy the monster Hydra; it had nine heads, and as each head was struck off two new ones grew forth in its place: hence the epithet 'hydra-headed' applied to a rebellion, an epidemic, or other evil that seems to gain strength from each endeavour to repress it.

false North: the meaning is, 'Though Scotland, having broken her alliance with the Parliament, renews the war on the pretext that the English have failed to observe the *Solemn League and Covenant.*' This is Milton's view of the matter.

8. **to imp their serpent wings**, *i.e.* 'to strengthen the English royalists, as a hawk's broken wing is *imped* or strengthened by the insertion of new feathers.' Euripides speaks of the monster Hydra as a winged serpent.

An 'imp' is properly a graft, or shoot, and was applied in a good sense to the scions or younger members of a family. Except in its technical sense in falconry (as in this line) it is now applied only in an uncomplimentary sense, *e.g.* to a troublesome child, a wicked spirit, etc.

9. **yet a nobler task**, *i.e.* a yet nobler task.

10. **still breed**, continue to breed. 'But' in this line = except.

12. **public faith ... public fraud.** 'Public' = in public affairs. The reference is to the fact that the army leaders (chiefly Independents) charged the Parliament (chiefly Presbyterians) with misappropriation of the war funds, and with having taken bribes from royalists.

13. **In vain**, etc.: the sense is, "The blood of brave men will be shed in vain for a land which is given up to avarice and self-seeking." By synecdoche, 'Valour' is put for 'men of valour.' For 'rapine' see *Il Pens.* 40, note.

SONNET XVI.

This sonnet, written in 1652, was, like the preceding one, called forth by a particular occasion, and does not profess (as Prof. Masson points out) to be a general estimate of Cromwell's career. The 'proposals' referred to in the sub-title were made regarding the provision of competent maintenance for ministers, and similar questions: they were put forward by a Committee for the Propagation of the Gospel, which had been appointed by Parliament to consider how the confused state of Church affairs might be remedied. In the sonnet Milton calls upon Cromwell to see that the Presbyterian party, aided by a section of Independents, did not succeed in imposing too great restrictions upon religious thought, or, at least, that it did not succeed in establishing a system of mercenary and self-seeking clergy.

1. **our chief of men.** Grammatically, 'our' may qualify 'chief.' Another explanation is that the phrase means 'chief of our men,' because in Elizabethan writers we often find an adjective or pronoun thus misplaced, *e.g.* in Shakespeare we have '*your* height of pleasure' = 'height of *your* pleasure,' etc. "To Milton Cromwell was *chief of men*, in respect of his personal qualities and thorough-going liberality of opinion, and not merely as the foremost man in the Commonwealth" (Pattison).

2. **but of detractions rude**: the syntax is: "who, guided by faith, etc., hast ploughed thy way *not only* through a cloud of war, *but also* through a cloud of rude detractions." 'Cloud of war' is a classical expression: comp. *nubem belli*, *Æn.* x. 809.

3. **Guided**: this participle modifies 'who.' It will be noticed that there is no principal verb in the first eight lines: they form a string of clauses which together qualify 'Cromwell.' *Who*, in l. 1, is nominative to *hast ploughed*, *hast reared*, and (*hast*) *pursued*; while *stream*, *field*, and *wreath* form the nominative to *resounds*. The effect of this involved construction is to make the pause in l. 9 very striking.

5. **neck of crownèd Fortune**: this is an unmistakable allusion to Charles I., expressed in Biblical language: comp. *Gen.* xlix. 8, "Thy hand shall be *on the neck* of thine enemies;" also Tennyson's *Dream of Fair Women*, 141: "I rode sublime on Fortune's neck."

6. **God's trophies**, memorials of God's victorious power. See note, *Il Pens.* 118.

7. **Darwen stream**; this falls into the Ribble near Preston in Lancashire, where Cromwell routed the Scots in 1648 (see *Son.* xv.).

imbrued, stained. This is an unusual application of the word, as its literal sense is 'soaked' or 'moistened.' Both *imbrue* and *imbue* are originally from a Latin root meaning to drink in or imbibe: *imbrue* is usually applied to material objects, and *imbue* to a person's mind, language, etc.

8. **Dunbar field.** The battle of Dunbar (Sept. 3, 1650), in which Cromwell defeated the Scots; they were not crushed, however, and Cromwell had to march south as far as Worcester before he finally overthrew the royalists. 'Resounds' is singular; it may be repeated with each of its three nominatives.

9. **Worcester's laureate wreath.** The battle of Worcester was fought on the 3rd of September, 1651, the anniversary of Dunbar. On the same day, seven years later, Cromwell died. Hence Byron's allusion to "his day of double victory and death." He called Worcester his 'crowning mercy'; hence Milton's allusion to the laureate wreath. 'Laureate,' composed of laurels, a token of victory. The title 'Poet Laureate' arose from an ancient university custom of presenting a wreath of laurel to graduates in rhetoric and poetry.

yet...still. Yet=nevertheless; still=yet (adverb of time).

remains To conquer, *i.e.* remains to be conquered. This idiom is a relic of an older use of the infinitive (comp. 'a horse *to sell*'), in which the word *to* has its full force as a preposition='much remains *to* the conquering.'

10. **her** is emphatic.

11. **new foes.** These are not the "new forcers of conscience" of *Son.* xii*a.*, but still newer foes, viz., those Independents who were not in favour of full spiritual independence.

12. **secular chains**, *i.e.* the bonds of a State Church: Milton was in favour of absolute separation of Church and State. 'Secular' (Lat. *seculum*, an age or generation), that which belongs to the present age, as opposed to that which concerns a future life; hence the words 'secular' and 'sacred' have come to be opposed to each other, like 'temporal' and 'spiritual.'

13. **Help**: this is the only imperative in the sonnet; it begins the special appeal for which the poem was written.

14. **hireling wolves**: comp. *Lyc.* 114. The word 'hireling' expresses Milton's contempt for all who served the Church for payment, "whose Gospel is their maw."

whose Gospel, etc., *i.e.* whose sole object is to obtain *worldly* benefits for themselves. 'Gospel'=God-spell, the story *of God: it is sometimes* used as a general term for any religious

system, and, still more widely, for any rule of life; *e.g.* we say that one man's *gospel* is to become rich, another's to become famous, and so on. It is aptly used in this sense by Milton, and at the same time suggests that Gospel which the clergy *ought* to have adopted.

'Maw'=stomach; used figuratively for appetite or desire: comp. *Lyc.* 119.

Sonnet XVII.

This sonnet, written 1652, has the same immediate aim as the preceding one. It is addressed to Sir Henry Vane (1612-1662), who was then forty years of age: he is called 'the younger' because his father was then alive. He entered the Long Parliament as M.P. for Hull at the age of 27, having previously distinguished himself as Governor of Massachusetts in America. At the date of the sonnet he was a member of the Council of State. He was beheaded in 1662 on account of his republican sympathies. As an Independent he had taken keen interest in the questions of State and Church, and was of an enthusiastic and somewhat fanatical disposition. Attempts have recently been made to exalt his ability as a politician, but with dubious success. "Clever and attractive, a good speaker, and industrious and able in transacting business, he never became a wise politician; he was conceited and impetuous, and just as in religion he was given to mysticism and extravagant vagaries, so in politics he was a theorist and a dreamer who ruled his conduct by abstract considerations without recognising his own position or the needs of his times" (*Saturday Review*, Dec. 1888). It is the more necessary, therefore, to bear in mind that Milton in this sonnet refers chiefly to the fact that Vane had, in Massachusetts, had occasion to consider the relations of Church and State.

1. With this line compare the common expression, 'an old head on young shoulders.'

2. **Than whom**, etc. 'Than' here looks like a preposition governing 'whom': but *than* is a conjunction, and if followed by a noun or pronoun some word or words must be supplied before deciding whether the noun or pronoun is in the correct case; *e.g.* "I admire you more than *he*"=more than *he admires* you; "I admire you more than *him*"=more than *I admire him*. In the case of the relative *whom* it is difficult to supply the ellipsis: this is seen if a personal pronoun in the same case be substituted for it, *e.g.* "a better senator than *him*," which would be wrong. The use of *whom* after *than* is a curious anomaly.

3. **helm of Rome.** By a common metaphor taken from the

steering of a ship we speak of the 'helm of a state,' *i.e.* its government. The highest council in Rome was the Senate.

gowns, not arms; senatorial wisdom, not generalship: comp. *L'Alleg.* 123. "Milton means, what is certainly true, that the fighting power of Rome could not have coped with these invaders had it not been directed by the administrative ability of the Senate" (Pattison).

4. **The fierce Epirot ... African bold**: Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, and Hannibal, the great Carthaginian general. Pyrrhus, one of the greatest generals of antiquity, invaded Italy in 280 B.C.: in his first campaign he gained a victory at Heraclea, but with such loss that he sent his minister Cineas to Rome with proposals of peace. These were rejected by the Senate: and Cineas, on his return, spoke of the Senate as an assembly of Kings. The war continued till 278.

Hannibal was compelled by his father to swear eternal enmity to Rome. He fought against Rome from B.C. 219 till his death thirty-seven years later.

5. **Whether to settle peace**, etc.: these infinitive clauses are explanatory of 'sage counsel,' l. 1. 'Settle peace'=arrange terms of peace; 'unfold the drift of hollow states'=lay bare the real intentions of untrustworthy foreign governments. 'Drift' =aim or meaning, literally 'that which is driven'; in colloquial English we say, 'What are you *driving* at?'=What is your meaning?

6. **hard to be spelled**, not easily understood. Milton here compliments Vane as a skilful diplomatist. Comp. *Il Pens.* 170.

7. **upheld**: participle qualifying 'war': 'war' is nominative to 'may move.' Comp. note on *Son.* xiii. 14.

8. **two main nerves**, *i.e.* the two chief requisites for carrying on a successful war, viz., arms and wealth. The idea is a common one, occurring in Greek and Latin writers, and being still current in the phrase "sinews of war" (Greek *neuron*, a sinew). Cicero speaks of money as *nervi belli*; and Tacitus has the words "No peace without war, no war without money."

9. **equipage**, necessary materials: what Shakespeare calls "pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war."

10. **spiritual power and civil**. The meaning is: 'Thou hast learned (as few have done) what the true nature of civil and ecclesiastical rule is, how they differ from each other, and what their relations ought to be.' For 'civil,' see note, *Il Pens.* 122.

11. **which few have done**: the antecedent to the relative is the whole object of the verb 'hast learned,' viz., 'to know both . . . each.' The phrase corresponds to an explanatory clause in *Latin introduced by quod.*

12. **bounds of either sword**, *i.e.* the limits of the power of the Church (=the sword spiritual), and of the State (the sword temporal). Some would identify these with the "two-handed engine," *Lyc.* 130.

13. Religion is said to look to Vane for support as a mother does to her eldest son.

Sonnet XVIII.

This sonnet, written in 1655, refers to a massacre in April of that year of the inhabitants of certain Piedmontese valleys in North Italy. These people (Vaudois or Waldenses) had, in their poverty and seclusion, preserved a simplicity of worship resembling that of the early days of Christianity; but in January, 1655, they were ordered by the Turin government to conform to the Catholic religion. Those who refused were to leave the country within three days under pain of death. Remonstrances were vain, a massacre was ordered, and for many days the Waldenses were exposed to the most frightful atrocities. When the news reached England the indignation reached a white heat, and Cromwell sent letters (written in Latin by Milton) and an ambassador to the offending Duke of Savoy demanding the withdrawal of the cruel edict; a Fast Day was appointed; and the sum of £40,000 was subscribed for the relief of the sufferers. The result was that they were allowed to return in peace to their valleys and to worship in their own way.

3. **Even them who kept thy truth**: see note above. 'Kept so pure'=preserved so free from the ritual that had crept into the Roman Catholic Church. 'Them' is the object of 'forget not.'

4. **worshiped stocks.** Milton considered Roman Catholicism to be idolatrous. 'Worshiped,' also spelt *worshipt.* Now that the participles of such words are almost exclusively formed by *-ed* the final consonant is doubled, thus, *worshipped:* this indicates the nature of the vowel sound; compare the sound of 'hoped' and 'hopped,' 'striped' and 'stripped.'

5. **in thy book**, etc. Here again we have biblical phraseology: comp. *Psalm* xvi. 8, "My tears, are they not in thy book?"

their groans Who, *i.e.* the groans of them who: see note, *L'Alleg.* 124.

7. **Slain**, who were slain.

rolled Mother with infant, etc. Such an incident actually took place. "A mother was hurled down a mighty rock with a little infant in her arms; and three days after was found dead with the child alive, but fast clasped between the arms of the

mother, which were cold and stiff, insomuch that those that found them had much ado to get the child out."

9. 'The valleys redoubled (=re-echoed) their cries to the hills, and the hills in turn redoubled them to heaven."

10. **martyred blood and ashes sow**, an allusion to Tertullian's saying, "The blood of martyrs is the *seed* of the Church." Milton prays that this massacre may be the means of spreading Protestantism wherever Roman Catholicism prevails.

11. **doth sway**, governs, holds sway.

12. **The triple Tyrant**, the Pope, in allusion to the triple crown (*tricoronifer*) or tiara worn by him as head of the Roman Catholic Church. Comp. Fletcher's words in *Locusts*—

> "*Three mitred crowns* the proud impostor wears,
> For he in earth, in hell, in heaven will reign."

that from these, etc., in order that from the blood and ashes of the Waldenses the number of Protestants may increase a hundredfold. 'Hundredfold' is here treated as a plural antecedent of 'who.'

13. **thy way**, God's way, the true religion.

14. **fly**, flee from, avoid. For this use of 'fly' comp. *Sams. Agon.* 1541.

the Babylonian woe, Papacy: see *Rev.* xvii. and xviii. The Puritans considered the Church of Rome to be the Babylon there mentioned.

Sonnet XIX.

This sonnet, probably written in 1655, is one of Milton's first references in poetry to that blindness which had gradually crept upon him since 1644 and had in 1652 blotted out his sight for ever. He continued, in spite of his affliction, to act as Secretary for Foreign Tongues to the Council of State during Cromwell's protectorate: the references in this sonnet to his enforced 'waiting' are to the poetical work for which he considered himself set apart.

1. **spent**, exhausted.

2. **Ere half my days**, *sc.* 'are spent.' His blindness was total when he was 44 years old: he died in 1674.

dark world and wide. These are touching words in the mouth of a blind man.

3. **that one talent.** The full construction is, 'and (when I consider how) that one talent, which (it) is death to hide, (is) *lodged with* me useless.' Talent (Lat. *talentum*, a balance) =

something weighed in a balance; hence applied to 'money' and metaphorically (as in the Scripture parable of the talents) to 'God's gift': the word has thus acquired the sense of 'a natural gift or ability,' and there is even an adjective from it—'talented' = clever, possessing natural ability. Milton modestly compares himself to the servant who had received only one talent (see *Matt.* xxv.).

which is death to hide, *i.e.* to hide which is death. To leave one's powers unemployed is equivalent to mental and spiritual death.

4. **more bent**, *sc.* 'is': 'bent,' determined.

6. **lest He returning chide**, *i.e.* lest He, on his return, reprove me for sloth. This use of the present participle, instead of an adverbial clause, is a Latinism: see note, *Son.* xiii. 14. In the parable mentioned above, we read: "After a long time the lord of these servants cometh and maketh a reckoning with them."

7. **Doth God exact day-labour.** The allusion is to *St. John*, ix. 4: "We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work."

light denied: absolute construction, equivalent (as often in Latin) to a conditional clause, = if light is denied.

8. **I fondly ask.** 'Fondly' = foolishly: see *Il Pens.* 6, note. This is the principal clause on which the preceding seven lines depend: the whole passage well illustrates the involved nature of Milton's syntax. It may be analysed thus—

A. Principal clause: I fondly ask, etc.
  Under A. { 1. Doth God .. denied (subst. clause).
  Under A. { 2. When I consider .. chide (adv. clause).
    Under 2. { (1) How my light is spent (subst. clause).
    Under 2. { (2) (How) that one talent .. useless (subst. clause).
      Under (1) *a.* Ere half .. wide (adv. clause).
      Under (2) { *b.* Which is death to hide (adj. clause).
      Under (2) { *c.* Though my soul .. account (adv. clause).
        Under *c.* (*a*) Lest .. chide (adv. clause).

10. **his own gifts**, *i.e.* the talents entrusted by Him to man.

Who: for construction, see note, *Son.* xii. 12.

12. **thousands**, *i.e.* thousands of angels. 'Angel' is literally 'messenger.' See *Par. Lost*, iv. 677.

13. **post**, hasten. Primarily *post* = something fixed; then a fixed place or stage on a line of road; then a person who travels from stage to stage; and finally any quick traveller.

14. **stand and wait**, *i.e.* 'those who, unable to do more, calmly submit to God's purposes, also render Him genuine service.'

Sonnet XX.

This sonnet, written in 1655 or 1656, proves that even in his blindness Milton could be L'Allegro as well as Il Penseroso. It is addressed to a son of that Henry Lawrence who was President of Cromwell's Council (1654) and a member of his House of Lords (1657). We do not know which of his sons is meant, but it was probably Henry, then about twenty-two years of age. He was one of a number of young men who, admiring Milton's genius, delighted to visit him, to talk with him, read to him, walk with him, or write for him.

1. **of virtuous father virtuous son**: comp. Horace—

"O matre pulchra, filia pulchrior."

2. **Now that the fields**, etc.: now, *when* the fields, etc. The use of 'that' for 'when' was once extremely common, but its use is now rare except after the adverb 'now.' (Abbott, § 284.)

ways are mire. The use of the noun 'mire' instead of the adjective 'miry' is significant of the state of the London streets in rainy weather.

3. **Where shall we sometimes meet?** a question which implies that, as they can neither walk into the country nor in the streets, they must meet indoors.

4. **Help waste**, *i.e.* help each other to spend: see note, *Arc.* 13. Compare Horace, "morantem saepe diem mero fregi"; also Milton's *Epitaphium Damonis*, 45.

what may be won, etc.: 'thus gaining from the inclement season whatever good may be got by meeting together'; the pleasures indoors will compensate for the loss of our walks out-of-doors.

6. **Favonius**: a frequent name in Latin poetry for Zephyr, the West Wind (see *L'Alleg.* 19); it was this wind that introduced the spring, 'melting stern winter,' as Horace says. In one of his masques Jonson calls Favonius "father of the spring."

reinspire: here used literally, 'to breathe new life into.'

8. **neither sowed nor spun**: an allusion to *Matt.* vi. 28, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin, yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." 'Spun' is here a past tense; see note, *Lyc.* 102.

9. **neat.** This is from Lat. *nitidus*, bright, attractive.

light and choice, temperate and well-chosen.

10. ***Of Attic taste***, 'such as would please the simple and refined

Athenian taste.' There may also be a kind of allusion to the fact that their food would be seasoned with 'Attic salt,' a common term for sparkling wit—for what are called in *L'Allegro* "quips and cranks."

11. **artful**, showing art or skill. This is its radical sense; it is now used in a less dignified sense, viz., wily or cunning. A similar change of meaning is seen in *artless*, *cunning*, etc. See note, *L'Alleg.* 141.

12. **Warble**: infinitive after 'hear.'

immortal notes: comp. *L'Alleg.* 137.

Tuscan, Italian: Tuscany being a compartment of Italy.

13. **spare To interpose**, etc., *i.e.* 'use them sparingly.' The Lat. *parcere* with an infinitive = 'to refrain from'; and the Latin verb *temperare* may mean either 'to refrain from' or 'to spare.' There is therefore no doubt of Milton's meaning.

14. **not unwise**, very wise. By a figure of speech the two negatives strengthen the affirmative sense: comp. 'no mean applause,' *Son.* xxi. 2.

Sonnet XXI.

This sonnet was written about the same time as the preceding one, and in a similar mood of cheerfulness. Milton wishes, in Cyriac Skinner's company, to throw off for a time the cares and worries of his Secretaryship and calls upon his friend to lay aside his study of politics and of mathematical and physical science. Cyriac Skinner was grandson of Sir Edward Coke, the famous lawyer and judge (1549-1634), and author of numerous legal works of great value.

1. **bench Of British Themis.** Coke was Solicitor-General in 1592 and afterwards Attorney-General. 'Bench,' a long seat, hence a judge's seat, and so used metaphorically for Law and Justice. Themis, "the personification of the order of things established by law, custom, and equity."

2. **no mean applause**: see note, *Son.* xx. 14, above.

3. **Pronounced.** *Pronuntiatio* is a Latin term for the decision of a judge, and we speak of a judge *pronouncing* sentence. Comp. *Lyc.* 83.

in his volumes, *e.g. The Institutes of the Laws of England*, *Reports*, in 13 vols., and *Commentaries on Lyttleton.*

4. **at their bar**, *i.e.* in administering the law: 'bar' is used metaphorically for 'a legal tribunal.'

wrench, pervert, twist. *Wrench* and *wrong* are both allied to *wring;* so that *wrong* means strictly 'twisted,' just as *right* means 'straight.'

5. 'To-day resolve with me to drench deep thoughts in such mirth as will not afterwards bring regret.' 'To drench deep thoughts' may be compared with such phrases as 'to drown care.'

6. **after**, afterwards.

7. **Let Euclid rest**, etc.: lay aside the study of mathematics, physical science, and political questions. Skinner was a diligent student of all these subjects. Euclid, the celebrated mathematician, is here by metonymy put for his works: the name has almost become synonymous with Geometry.

Archimedes (B.C. 287-212), a mathematician and physicist of the highest order, lived at Syracuse: when that city was taken, he was killed while intent upon a mathematical problem. He wrote on conic sections, hydrostatics, etc.

8. **what the Swede intend**, *sc.* 'let rest.' The verb being plural 'Swede' must here be plural, just as we say 'the Swiss,' 'the French,' 'the Dutch,' etc., to denote a whole nation. 'Swede,' however, is not now so used, the adjective being 'Swedish' and the noun (singular only) 'Swede;' hence some editions read *resounds*. When this sonnet was written, Charles X. of Sweden was at war with Poland and Russia, and Louis XIV. of France with Spain.

9. **To measure life**, etc., *i.e.* learn in good time how short life is, so that you may make the most of it. As Milton says in *Par. Lost*, "What thou liv'st Live well; how long or short permit to Heaven." 'Betimes' (by-time) = in good time: the final *s* is the adverbial suffix.

11. **For other things**, etc., *i.e.* Heaven has tenderly ordained that there shall be a time for mirth as well as anxious thought, and disapproves of the conduct of those who make a display of their anxiety and refuse to rejoice even when they may well do so. Comp. "Learn to jest in good time: there's a time for all things," *Com. of Errors*, ii. 2; also "Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself: sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," *Matt.* xi. 34.

SONNET XXII.

This sonnet, omitted from the edition of 1673 owing to the reference in the closing lines, was written on the third anniversary

of the day on which Milton's blindness became total: it must therefore have been composed in 1655.

1. **this three years' day**: in prose we say, 'this day three years,' 'three years this day,' or 'three years ago to-day,' all adverbial phrases. 'Three years'' has the force of an adjective qualifying 'day.' Comp. "I saw not better sport these seven years' day," Shakespeare, 2 *Henry VI.* ii.

though clear To outward view, *i.e.* though apparently uninjured. Some of Milton's enemies taunted him with his 'lack-lustre eye,' but he was able to say that his blindness had not altered the appearance of his face, though (he admits) 'in spite of myself, I am a deceiver.'

3. **Bereft**, deprived. *Be* is an intensive prefix, and *reave* is from the same A.S. word as *rob*: see *Lyc.* 107.

their seeing have forgot, *i.e.* have forgotten (= lost) their power of vision. For 'forgot' see note, *Son.* xi. 1.

4. **their idle orbs**, useless eyeballs. 'Orb' is here correctly used to denote the ball of the eye (Lat. *orbis*): compare Virgil's *Aen.* xii., *oculorum orbis;* also *Sams. Agon.* 591, "those dark orbs no more shall treat the light."

5. **Of sun or moon**, etc. The word *or* is here used four times, 'either' being understood before 'of.' *Or* is a corruption of *either*, not of *other*, and means 'any one of two'; but it is often used where there are more than two objects noted.

7. **bate a jot of**, diminish in the least degree. 'Bate' is a contraction of 'abate.'

9. **What supports me?** Milton's answer is, 'I am supported in my affliction by the thought that I lost my sight through over-exertion in the noble task of defending liberty.' 'Conscience'= consciousness or knowledge: the word is not now used in this general sense, and is so used only twice by Milton (see *Par. Lost*, viii. 502). It has still this meaning in French, but in English it is restricted to 'knowledge of right and wrong.'

10. **them**, *i.e.* my eyes.

overplied, overworked. 'Ply' is from Lat. *plico*, to fold or mould; and as in moulding clay the fingers must be kept steadily at work, 'ply' has come to signify constant and steady effort, *e.g.* to *ply* a task.

11. **In Liberty's defence.** The poet refers to his great pamphlet *Defensio Pro Populo Anglicano*, published in 1651, in reply to one by Salmasius, who condemned the execution of Charles I. The writing of this Defence and its sequel hastened Milton's blindness.

12. **talks.** So Milton very modestly wrote, but most editions have 'rings,' on the suggestion of an editor in 1694 (comp. *Son.* xv. 1). The compliment implied in the change is none too great, and therefore deserves to be noticed, though not incorporated in the text.

13. **world's vain mask.** It is common in poetry to liken the world and life to a play: comp. Shakespeare, "A stage where every man must play his part."

14. **had I,** etc., *i.e.* if I had no better guide.

Sonnet XXIII.

This was his second wife, Catherine Woodcock, who died in childbirth in February, 1657, fifteen months after her marriage. She had been a good and faithful wife to him. This sonnet was probably written in 1658.

1. **Methought:** see note, *Son.* x. 11. Milton speaks as if he were recalling a dream.

espoused, married: from Fr. *espouer*, to marry (Lat. *sponsus*, promised). Strictly it may be applied either to husband or wife, though now generally used of the latter alone.

2. **Alcestis,** wife of Admetus, king of Pherae in Thessaly: on the day of his marriage with Alcestis, Admetus neglected to offer a sacrifice to Artemis, but Apollo reconciled the goddess to him, and induced the Fates to grant him deliverance from death if his father, mother or wife would die for him. His wife died in his stead, but was brought from the lower world by Hercules, "Jove's great son."

4. **Rescued:** participial idiom; comp. *Son.* xiii. 14.

5. **Mine:** pronoun, subject to 'came,' l. 9.

as whom, *i.e.* as or like (those) whom, etc. The antecedent of the relative is not expressed.

6. **Purification.** By the Old Law is meant the Mosaic law, which enjoined certain ceremonies of purification upon mothers after child-birth. See *Leviticus* xii.

7. **And such as yet,** etc., *i.e.* and such *as* I trust *yet*, etc.

8. **without restraint.** This is an allusion to the legal restrictions upon women under the Old Law noted above.

9. **all in white,** as if denoting that ceremonial uncleanness *ended with* death: for the force of *all* see note, *Il Pens.* 33.

10. **Her face was veiled.** This may signify that Milton had never actually seen his wife, and could not therefore picture her face in his dreams.

my fancied sight, *i.e.* the eye of my fancy = my imagination.

11. **shined,** shone. In early English *shine* is a strong verb, *shinen* being the past participle and *shone* the past tense. But as early as the fourteenth century *shined* occurs as a past tense.

12. There seem to be two comparisons involved in this line: 'love, etc., shone more clearly in her face than they have ever done in any other'; and 'love, etc., shone with more delight in her face than in any other.'

13. **as,** while; introduces a temporal clause.

inclined, bent over me.

14. **day brought back my night,** *i.e.* daybreak recalled me to the knowledge of my blindness (and loneliness). This verbal contradiction between 'day' and 'night' is very striking.

INDEX TO THE NOTES.

[REFERENCES:—M.M. = *Song on May Morning:* Sh. = *On Shakespeare:* U. = *On the University Carrier:* E. = *Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester:* T. = *On Time:* A. = *L'Allegro:* P. = *Il Penseroso:* Arc. = *Arcades:* L. = *Lycidas:* S. = *Sonnet.*]

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